

LEXIPHANES,

A

DIALOGUE.

Imitated from LUCIAN, and suited to
the present Times.

B E I N G

An Attempt to restore the ENGLISH Tongue
to its ancient Purity,

And to correct, as well as expose, the affected Style,
hard Words, and absurd Phraseology of many late
Writers, and particularly of

OUR ENGLISH LEXIPHANES, the RAMBLER.

Whose ordinary rate of Speech,
In Loftiness of Sound is rich ;
A *Babylonish* Dialect,
Which learned Pedants much affect :
It is a parti-colour'd Dress,
Of patch'd and py-bald Languages .
'Tis English cut on *Greek* or *Latin*,
Like Fustian heretofore on Satin.

HUDIBRAS.

The FOURTH EDITION, corrected.

D U B L I N :

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LEXIPHANES

DIALOGUE

AND
THE
MUSEUM
OF
ANTIQUE
ARTS
AND
ARCHAEOLOGY



OF THE
BRITISH
MUSEUM

THE
MUSEUM
OF
ANTIQUE
ARTS
AND
ARCHAEOLOGY

THE
FOURTH
EDITION

BY
J. H. M.
AND
J. H. M.

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

G E O R G E,
L O R D L Y T T E L T O N.

M Y L O R D,

O N looking round me, throughout the world, for some distinguished character, to whose protection and fostering care, I might commit the following performance, which stands so greatly in need of it, not only as it is the production of a nameless author, but because it combats many inveterate prejudices of the age and nation we live in, and likewise attacks some reputations established so firmly in the opinions of most men, that they may be thought in no danger from any, I

could think of no one to whom I could address it with so much propriety as to your Lordship. And that for several reasons. In the first place, your Lordship is the best and happiest imitator of Lucian our nation has yet produced, and you have, with a peculiar felicity, hit off the natural air and turn of his dialogue. In the next place, of a learned and animated writer as your Lordship undoubtedly is, you are the purest and chastest of any I know now living, and the remotest from that affectation and *Lexiphanicism* which are at once the disgrace and characteristick of the age. Therefore it was most natural for me, an humble follower of our own common and great original, and a declared advocate for the purity and simplicity of language, to pitch upon your Lordship for a Patron, who are the best imitator of the one, or rather a most beautiful original in a path he has only shewn you, and give
in

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in your admirable writings, the best example of the other.

But there was another consideration, which at the time influenced me even more than (this, and made me think the present address, not only a matter of propriety in regard to myself, but also a sort of debt or atonement due to your Lordship. I beg leave to explain myself. I have been all my lifetime very little conversant with authors that can strictly be called modern ; (for even Swift is now to be looked upon as a kind of ancient) and I reckon it my great happiness to have been so. I had indeed heard, for who that dabbles in books has not, of the EXCELLENT RAMBLER, the *Great Mr. S———* / *J———n* ; I had likewise seen his volumes on a bookseller's counter, or a friend's table, and had sometimes taken them up with an intent to peruse a paper or so, but was never able to go through the task ; for being present-

ly disgusted with the pedantry and affectation in every page, I could not help throwing them down with a contempt and indignation, which, perhaps, the defects of the language excepted, might be very undeserved. At last, during a long voyage at sea, when I had access to no other English books but what I had been long acquainted and very familiar with, excepting the *Ramblers* which happened accidentally to be on board, in order to divert the idle and solitary hours unavoidable in that sort of life, I was in a manner obliged to read them, which accordingly I did with great care and attention. I immediately perceived, and was very forcibly struck with the strong resemblance there subsists between Mr. J——n's character, and that of the *Limoufin* scholar in *Rabelais*, and of *Lexiphanes* in *Lucian*. And I concluded, that an imitation of the latter would be admirably well suited

to expose that false taste and ridiculous manner of writing; and that it might also be of eminent use to letters, by decrying that absurd *Lexiphanick* stile, which from the great and universal reputation this Pedant enjoyed, I reasonably imagined had become fashionable among us, and might, in a short time, bring on an entire decline and corruption, nay, a total alteration of our language, as had been the case with the Roman tongue under the Emperors.

Therefore, as soon as I had an opportunity, I set about the following work with all the diligence and application I was master of. In the course of it, besides Mr. J——n's, I carefully perused, it may safely be said, for the first time, what other modern writings came in my way; and I generally found them more or less *Lexiphanick* in proportion to the share of fame and reputation their several authors enjoyed. I now recollected, that your Lordship had

written *Dialogues of the Dead*, in imitation of Lucian, and that I had heard them highly applauded. I hope your Lordship will forgive me, for I can hardly forgive myself, if I concluded, not having then read them, that those applauses might be owing, partly to their author's quality and exalted station, but much more to their *Lexiphanic*ism, or being written in compliance with the reigning taste of the times. I was ambitious, like the young Ascanius, who, hunting with his father Eneas and Dido,

—Daria pecora inter inertia votis
Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere
monte leonem.

I thought your Lordship would be a much nobler object of Criticism, than even the great Mr. S———l J———n, and if I should be able to extract a *Rhapsody* from the *Dialogues*, as easily as from the *Ramblers*, at least I hoped to

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to have the occasion of referring to them frequently in the *notes*, and making *rbetorical flourishes* on their author, who professing to imitate Lucian, had so imperfectly studied that great original, and so little profited by his excellent Dialogue of Lexiphanes, and his admirable Essay on the best manner of writing history.

With such views, and with such expectations, I immediately had recourse to your Dialogues. But it was not long before I found myself greatly disappointed, and disappointed in a most agreeable manner. Instead of being able to show them, pardon the freedom of the expression, as a sort of scarecrow or beacon, a warning for others to avoid their faults ; I perceived they were a model of imitation, a pattern for all to follow ; and was soon made sensible, I must content myself with becoming a distant and humble imitator of an author, whom, but a few

hours before, I thought to have made the object of my criticisms.

But if this were a small mortification, it was soon followed by a much more sensible pleasure. If I could not expose your Lordship's writings as a warning to others, I found I could do what was much more for my purpose, support my own opinion by their great and unquestioned authority. The passage I have in view, is so apposite to the subject in hand, and coincides so entirely with my own sentiments, that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting it, notwithstanding it may be thought somewhat improper in an address to your Lordship. It is in the Dialogue between Pliny the Elder, and Pliny the Younger, where the uncle says to the nephew ;

— “Your eloquence had, I think,
“the same fault as your manners : it
“was generally too *affected*. You
“professed to make Cicero your guide
and

“ and pattern. But when one reads his
 “ Panegyrick upon Julius Cæsar, and
 “ your’s upon Trajan, the first seems the
 “ genuine language of truth and nature,
 “ raised and dignified with all the majesty
 “ of the most sublime Oratory: the lat-
 “ ter appears the harangue of a florid
 “ *Rhetorician* more desirous to *shine*, and
 “ to set off his own wit, than to extol
 “ the great man whose virtues he was
 “ praising.”

The other makes the following answer :

“ I will not question your judgment,
 “ either of my life or my writings.
 “ They might both have been better,
 “ if I had not been too solicitous to ren-
 “ der them perfect. It is perhaps, some
 “ excuse for the affectation of my stile,
 “ that it was the fashion of the age in
 “ which I wrote. Even the eloquence of
 “ Tacitus, however nervous and sublime,
 “ was not unaffected. Mine, indeed,
 “ was more diffuse, and the ornaments
 “ of

“ of it were more tawdry ; but his la-
“ boured conciseness, the constant *glow*
“ of his Diction, and pointed *brilliancy* of
“ his sentences, were no less unnatural.
“ One principal cause of this, I suppose
“ to have been, that as we despaired of
“ excelling the two great masters of
“ Oratory, Cicero and Livy, in their
“ own manner, we took up another,
“ which, to many, appeared more *shining*,
“ and gave our compositions a more ori-
“ ginal air. But it is mortifying to me,
“ to say much on this subject. Permit me
“ therefore, to resume the contemplation
“ of that on which our conversation
“ turned before.”——

And here I am sorry the nature of the subject, which is the famous eruption of Vesuvius, wherein the Elder Pliny lost his life, prevented your proceeding any farther. It might, indeed, be a mortifying theme to the Panegyrist

rist of Trajan, but surely it could not be so to the noble author of the Persian Letters, who had in them shewn so fine a taste, and given so many illustrious examples of the natural and simple style. I regretted then, and my Lord, I still do regret you had not made it the subject of an entire Dialogue. It is well worthy of your masterly pen; and besides, you might have rendered it needless for an unknown, and what much worse, an inferior hand to undertake it.

And yet I doubt, whether, upon second thoughts, your Lordship's manner be so well suited to the adversaries you would have to cope withal. For believe me, as there is not in nature a vainer, a more self-sufficient and conceited, so there cannot be a more unfeeling animal than a veteran *Lexiphanes*. His sensations are naturally so dull and obtuse, that I question much

if he would be in the least affected by the nice touches of your Lordship's delicate and refined raillery, so much like that of Addison, and of which you have given so beautiful an illustration as well as example in the admirable dialogue between Swift and him. Nay, you have already determined this article against yourself; for in the close of that dialogue, where you assign their different provinces to those two *rival wits*, you would have "Addison* employed in comforting those whose delicate minds are dejected with too painful a sense of some infirmities in their nature; and held up to them this fair and charitable mirror, which would bring to their sight their hidden excellencies, and put them in a temper fit for Elysium." And this indeed seems to be the humane and benevolent purpose of your Lordship's work. Whereas to Dr. Swift you "allot

* Dialogues of the Dead, page 32.

the task of humbling the arrogant Hero, the vain Philosopher, and the proud Bigot." But I believe your Lordship will agree with me, that the *hard back* of the petulant overbearing Pedant requires as much as any of the other characters, the severe lashes of *that rod, which draws blood at every stroke*. It is for this reason, supported by your great authority, and perhaps from a more cogent one still, its being better adapted to my own temper and disposition, that I have chosen the rough and coarser manner of Swift, or rather Lucian.

But to return from this digression, which cannot be altogether impertinent, as most of it is taken from your Lordship; I must add, that I no sooner found myself deceived, in supposing you tainted with *Lexiphanicism*, which I need not inform you, literally signifies that *shining affected diction*, you so justly condemn, than I determined,

terminated, should this piece ever be made publick, as a small atonement for the temporary injustice I had done you, and that only in my thoughts, to inscribe it to your Lordship, and to implore your protection for it. And as your high rank and quality would not have deterred me from criticising your works, had I found occasion ; so it is not that alone, but your great merit and excellence, your acknowledged superiority as a writer, that has in a manner extorted this address from me. But it has at the same time emboldened me, not only to ask, but even to expect your patronage and protection. For after all, my Lord, it is in reality more your business than mine. I have nothing to lose, I am only a volunteer in the cause, and can hope for nothing, but a small share of the spoil ; whereas you, considered as an author, have a very great estate at stake ; I mean that honest fame, and well deserved reputation in letters,

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ters, which I know your Lordship must have taken so much pains to acquire. In short, my Lord, if you at all regard That, you ought not to suffer those *Lexiphaneses*, those *Shiners*, those Dealers in *bard words*, and *absurd pbrases*, those *Fabricators* of *Triads* and *Quaternions*, and I know not what, to carry all before them in the manner they have lately done, and to persuade themselves and the public, that they are the only authors worth regard, and that their uncouth trash is the sole standard of perfection in the English tongue. There is as great an antipathy between a pure and natural writer, such as your Lordship, and a *Lexiphanes*, as there is between an elephant and a rhinoceros. When they meet, they are sure to fall foul of one another, most commonly the *Lexiphanes* first, for the other often holds him too cheap, and the contest is never at an end till one is destrayed.

Be-

Besides, the very circumstance of your being a man of fortune and quality, will procure you worse quarter from those Lexiphaneses, than a meer adventurer would have. The reason is this. They are all, excepting the boys just raw from the university, authors by profession; and they reckon a gentleman who writes, or in the language of the Shop, makes a book, an interloper who takes so much of their trade out of their hands. They would much rather have his custom than his assistance in what they all profess, the improvement and instruction of the reader. They look upon him with no friendlier eyes, than a taylor would on a man of fashion, who should take a fancy to cut out and make up his own cloaths.

But that they entertain a particular spite against noble authors, I shall give your Lordship a very pregnant proof, and shew you, from the fate of others, what
you

you have reason to expect. Highly as I esteem your writings, and though I may think them, from their moral tendency and the excellent political instruction contained in them, of more general benefit than the productions of either Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, or Granville, Lord Lansdown; yet, in respect to elegance and purity of style, there are few that can be deemed superior. On the contrary, I am afraid, the highest praise any modern writer can now aspire to, is not to be excelled in these articles by them. And yet that dogmatical pedant, who is the Hero, or rather the Butt in the following Dialogue, talking of the small damage he imagines Letters have sustained by the loss of authors, once famous in their day, comforts us, by supposing, he does not tell us for what reason, they might be only the Sheffields and Granvilles of their times; (I wonder, when his hand was in, he

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he did not add Clarendon, Temple, Dorset, in a word, every man of rank and fortune, who ever put pen to paper, he might have done it with equal justice ;) and then proceeds very gravely to inform us, posterity will wonder by what chance or accident, such men ever came to acquire any reputation.

These Noblemen, my Lord, for the protection and encouragement they afforded to Letters, and for the honour they did them by their practice and example, were highly and justly celebrated by all their rival and contemporary wits, and by none more than the two greatest our nation ever produced, Dryden and Pope, one of whom at least can never be suspected of flattery. By him too your Lordship has been greatly celebrated, for the other was gone long before you appeared, and yet both have not saved your predecessors from the attack of this presumptuous Pedant.

My

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My Lord, from the care and polishing I perceive you have bestowed on your writings, you must have been somewhat earnest about their success, and that reputation you have taken such pains to acquire, you cannot but wish to preserve. Nor can you be indifferent about the language of your native country, that country you love so much, of which you are so bright an ornament, and whose excellent constitution you have illustrated, explained and defended, both in your public and private capacity with so great zeal and success. But, my Lord, the Ramblers of Mr. J——n, who has, besides the advantage of being author of, what is believed, the only Grammar and Dictionary we yet have, not to mention many works of others all in the same strain, and much applauded and sought after, are proposed with great confidence to the publick, not only by the man himself, but by his numerous

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merous followers and admirers, as the best model of writing, and the only standard of purity and elegance in the English tongue; and what is worse, are actually thought to be so by nine readers of ten in the nation. Hence the question plainly comes to this result: Whether we shall continue to write and speak the language transmitted down to us by our ancestors, who have hardly derived more honour to their country, from their numberless victories obtained, and gallant exploits performed in every quarter of the globe, than from their inimitable writings in every branch of science and literature; or whether we shall adopt, I will not say a new language, but a barbarous jargon, attempted to be imposed upon us, by a few School-masters and Pedants, who owe all their credit to their petulance and impudence, who are equally ignorant of books and men, and who think they have

have done a fine thing when they have tack'd an English termination to a Latin word, and have huddled together a parcel of quaint unmeaning phrases, whose only effect is to make the stupid reader stare, and cry *'tis mighty fine*.

'Tis true, that in the dialogue I have represented the overthrow of *Lexiphanicism* as a very desperate undertaking indeed. And though this might be partly done to heighten its humour, yet I must confess that such were in a great measure my real sentiments at the time. But since, and within these few months, I have seen many late performances, written in a pure and manly style, and which I have the pleasure to see from the number of their editions, have met with deserved success. From hence, and from some other circumstances, I incline to believe, that *the true taste* and *Lexiphanicism*, are at present pretty nearly on a balance,

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balance, and that an additional weight, thrown into the right scale, would at once decide the business. And this weight, none is so proper, or has so much interest to throw in as your Lordship.

Besides, should the advocates for *plainness* and *simplicity* be greatly outnumbered by their adversaries, they are armed with a weapon, which the *Lexiphanises* have not to use against them, and against which, they have at the same time no defence. It is not grave, solid reasoning from the genius of our language, the authority of our best writers, and so forth; for in that case you would soon be overpowered by a torrent of hard words and terms of art, which the ignorant multitude would immediately construe into deeper learning. But it is Ridicule. And this powerful engine I have therefore employed against them. With what success, your Lordship and the publick must soon determine.

But

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But should I prove unsuccessful, you, my Lord, whose concern it ought so much to be, can easily recommend the task to another, who may possess happier talents, and perform it in a more satisfactory manner. As for me, I shall account it sufficient honour, to have started the game, tho' I should be thrown out in the chace, and should not even be present at the death.

Having troubled you so long, I must conclude this Address as abruptly as it began, indulging, at the same time, a favourite piece of vanity, by declaring, in this publick manner, that I have the good sense, taste and judgment, to be

Your Lordship's

Sincere Admirer,

And most Obedient

Humble Servant.

THE DEDICATION

The thought of presenting a book to the public is a task of no small importance. It is a task which requires the most careful consideration and the most judicious selection of the material to be presented. It is a task which requires the most careful selection of the material to be presented. It is a task which requires the most careful selection of the material to be presented.

I have written this book for the purpose of presenting to the public a collection of the most interesting and valuable facts and figures which have been gathered together in this country.

In this book I have endeavored to present to the public a collection of the most interesting and valuable facts and figures which have been gathered together in this country. I have endeavored to present to the public a collection of the most interesting and valuable facts and figures which have been gathered together in this country.

And with O. Schmitt
H. B. Schmitt

P R E F A C E.

*T*HE scope and intention of the following performance, is so fully set forth in the Title and Dedication, that little more need be said of it in the preface. But I think it not amiss to inform the Reader, that this Dialogue, together with the Sale of Authors, and some other imitations of Lucian, was composed about three years ago in one of our American Colonies, as is well known to many in that country. Some friends, and one gentleman in particular, to whom I lay under many other obligations, and perhaps owed both leisure and spirits to resume some long-interrupted and well-nigh forgotten studies, thought so well of the plan, and approved of the intention so much, that they attempted getting it printed at the time and place where it was first written; and with this view, and at their request, I put it in the state it now is. How this attempt came not to succeed, is immaterial, and I only mention it, because some things seem to have

been written for that time, and some Authors are taken notice of, who, though since dead, were then at the height of their reputation.

I had also begun and made some progress in a preface wherein I endeavoured to account for the late manifest decline of Taste and good writing among us, and to propose some remedies for the same. But finding I had not lights sufficient to execute such a Task as it ought to be, and that were it so done, it would be much too large for the work it was intended to introduce into the world, I left it unfinished; and now find that what I had written is entirely lost, owing to some of those many accidents unavoidable in a wandering unsettled life. I wonder, indeed, the following papers escaped the same fate, having been carelessly lost about, and altogether neglected by me for above two years past. I doubt not but Lexiphanes's janizaries and admirers may very wittily suggest, it would have been no damage if they had; be this however as it may, on revising them now for the press, I chose to let them go as I found them, with the addition of only a few notes. Not that I would hereby insinuate, I think them faultless; on the contrary, I am afraid the Rhapsody is rather too long,

long, and even, that it is not so highly finished as it ought to be, that is to say, it is not sufficiently Lexiphanick, if I may use the expression. There are, moreover, a few loose passages in it, which I am sorry may be thought to require an apology. But they are wrapt up in such a mist of hard words, that to understand them, requires a closer intimacy with Lexiphanes, than methinks any fine lady ought to have. Besides, the original is infinitely more licentious than the copy. This naturally led me into them at first, but the true reason why, on a revision, I retained them, is what follows. I really thought the applying those cant words and affected phrases, in that sense, was the best way of ridiculing and expressing them, and should this Dialogue ever become any way popular, it would most effectually banish them out of good company and polite writing. I own, likewise, that the references are neither so numerous, nor perhaps so accurate as they might have been. This is owing to my having lost some scattered loose papers, wherein, with a great deal of pains and labour, I had marked down with their proper references of pages and numbers, most of the absurdities I met with on perusing Mr.

J—n's works, and some others of the like strain, and from thence had transferred them, as I thought they would come in best into the Rhapsody, and those other parts of the Dialogue where Lexiphanes is the speaker. There was no other way to remedy this loss, if it really be one, than to go through the same most irksome task over again. But I could not prevail on myself to do it. Truth was, I did not care to be raking any more among their filth and trash, for fear some of it might stick to myself. For in this work, I am no other than a literary scavenger; a sort of gentry very necessary to the cleanliness of others, but by no means the cleanliest folks in the world themselves.

As to the rest of the Dialogue, which is, indeed the principal part, and wherein I have, endeavoured to shew, as well as my poor abilities would permit me, both by precept and example, how to write better, I freely own, after a very careful examination, whether respecting its conduct, stile, or sentiments, I do not find any thing I can alter, at least, for the better: and I therefore abandon it as lawful booty to the Criticks to use it as they please.

Should it be asked why I have published it, with the imperfections I confess it hath; I answer,

answer, that though this is not designed for a temporary thing, but may last and even be useful when our Lexiphaneses are forgotten, yet its success, and what is pretty odd, its own reputation depends in some measure, on the greatness of those very reputations it is intended to demolish and overturn. A bad and a corrupt taste is ever fickle and changing. Some new Lexiphaneses may soon arise, who, shooting a bolt beyond Mr. J——n, in his *Ramblers*, or Mr. Ak——de, in his *Pleasures of Imagination*, may deprive them of that fame they certainly never deserved to enjoy, and at the same time establish their own on the ruins. They may likewise write in a different manner, in a manner more difficult to hit, and consequently to ridicule and expose, in which case this performance, about which I confess to have taken a good deal of pains, would be, at the very first, no better than that waste-paper it may come to be at last. I am afraid it hath lost some of its force and propriety already, and the longer it is delayed, must lose the more. Besides, expecting, at least hoping soon to leave this country, to which I may never return, the present might be the only opportunity I should ever have of

printing it, which I was not willing to neglect, for with all its faults, I really do think it may be eminently useful to the public, in correcting and setting right the taste of young writers, and of young gentlemen at the academy and university, who are so naturally led astray by the false glitter of Mr. F——n's prose, and the sublime nonsense of Mr. Ak——de's verse. For there is good reason to believe, that were the *Ramblers* and *Pleasures of Imagination* on the one hand, and the *Spectator* and Dryden's *Fables* on the other, the one the most faulty and affected, the other the best and purest of all works of their kind, to be ballotted for as school-books, in an assembly of all the Masters and school-boys of the nation; there is good reason to believe, I say, that the former would carry it against the latter by a majority of at least ten to one.

There has been much talk about correcting, improving and ascertaining a living tongue, as well in our own country, as among the French and Italians. Many great writers, and if I mistake not, Doctor Swift among the rest, have thought a Grammar and Dictionary necessary for that purpose, and have therefore lamented the want of them. I have declared
my

my opinion of these in the Dialogue, but shall here do it more at large. 'Tis certain that a Grammar or Dictionary, if good for any thing, must be compiled or extracted from good authors; but that these again should become necessary, and even indispensable to form, or rather to create good authors, appears to me, I confess, something like a circle in logick, or the perpetual motion in mechanicks; the one a vicious mode of reasoning, and the other a downright impossibility. 'Tis true, they may be useful to ladies or country squires, to avoid an error in spelling, and now and then a gross blunder or impropriety in speech. And farther I conceive their utility, however boasted of, does not extend; unless, indeed, in a dead language, or to a foreigner who studies a living one, in the same manner we are obliged to study Greek or Latin. But an author or an orator, who takes upon him to write or speak to the people in their own tongue, ought to be above consulting them.

Besides, if we have recourse to experience and matter of fact, the surest criterion in all such affairs, we shall perceive, that as the want of them has been no loss, so when procured, they have done as little service. Ho-
mer

mer and Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, all wrote without Grammar or Dictionary, and most of them without so much as knowing what they were. So have all the best writers of Italy, France and England. Nor do I hear that the Dictionaries of the two former, though compiled by bodies of men, the most illustrious for their learning, have done any mighty feats since their appearance; that they have fixed or established their respective languages, or made the writers in either a whit more elegant and correct than they would have been without them. We too, in imitation of them, must also have our Dictionary. But by whom is it compiled? By Lexiphanes himself, the great corrupter of our taste and language. I own I have never had opportunity to consult either the French or Italian Dictionaries; but Mr. J——n's, I am certain, falls infinitely short of what I conceive it ought to be, to answer any purpose it is intended to serve. It ought to contain, in a manner, a distinct treatise on every word that is, or ever has been in use, branched out into a thousand particulars very difficult to enumerate, but almost impossible to execute. And what man or body of Men are
equal

equal to such a task ? Besides, were it executed, who could use it, or reap any benefit from it ? It would be in itself a library, infinitely more voluminous than the abridgment of our laws in twenty Volumes Folio, or even than our laws themselves at large. In short, we may pronounce a perfect Dictionary to be like the Philosopher's Stone, once a great Desideratum among some people, impossible to obtain, and which, perhaps, we are better without.

The celebrated Doctor Swift, in his Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue, strenuously recommends the institution of a society composed of such persons, as are generally allowed to be best qualified for such a work, namely, the fixing, correcting, and enlarging our language, without any regard to quality, party, or profession : and who, to a certain number, at least, should assemble at some appointed time and place, and fix on Rules by which they designed to proceed. That such a society instituted at that time, and composed of persons appointed by Swift himself, or by the great man to whom the proposal is addressed ; might have been eminently useful for the purposes there mentioned, I shall not, by any means,

means, bring into question. But then, who would warrant the immortality of those persons, or that their successors should be possessed of the same abilities, and animated with the same spirit? In that supposition, indeed, it is possible such Lexiphanick fustian, as we have lately been pestered with, might never have had existence, at least, never been heard of. But in the situation things now are, I think I may venture to assert, without any danger of rashness, that if such a society had been instituted a few years ago, and I know not but it would be the same at present, our great Lexicographer, the excellent Rambler, would have been elected Secretary, and, perhaps, the British Lucretius, of whom more hereafter, appointed Register of it. Then, indeed, matters would have been much worse, and really past redemption. For who would have been so hardy as to attack, and on the score of their language too, the Secretary and Register of an Academy erected for correcting, improving, and ascertaining that very language; and at the head of which, most certainly would have been every the most illustrious name and character in the nation. Even as the case now stands, this attempt is, by some, I know, thought too daring

daring for a private person. Perhaps it may be true, that nothing can entirely justify him in it but success; though, indeed, my perfect indifference, at least, with respect to private concerns, whether it succeed or no, may plead my excuse.

Having thus, and I think on very sufficient grounds, rejected as improper and inadequate every method hitherto proposed, though by some of our greatest men, for the laudable purposes of fixing and ascertaining our Mother Tongue, it may be thought incumbent on me, to propose another which may supply the deficiencies of others. I have already done it in the dedication. The corrupters of our Tongue, in the days of Swift and Steele, were pert lively fops; they were great curtailers of words, and took a pleasure in lopping of their first and last syllables, as owls bite off the feet of mice, in order to confine and fatten them. But our modern gentry are quite the reverse of the others; they are grave, solemn, formal coxcombs, and have much more of the ass than the ape in their composition; they cannot endure an elision, are mighty fond of long-tailed worm-like words, and as they think our own language does not afford a sufficient stock of them, they import them
in

in great quantities from the Greek and Latin. Therefore they are the properest objects of ridicule in the world, and though from their stupidity, pride, or conceit, they may not smart so severely at first, under the lash, as a livelier dunce; yet it must have a greater and more durable effect upon them at last; and whatever fondness they may express in imitation of their Principal for jocularity and burlesque, harmless merriment, easy facetiousness, and flowing hilarity; yet as they are altogether incapable of making a retort, and quite unprovided with any means of defence, they must soon be laught out of all their followers and admirers, and left single and destitute by themselves.

There are now, and I trust always will be, many persons of real taste and wit in the nation, and were they to join in a scheme of this sort, and mutually encourage and support one another in the prosecution of it, they would find it a much more effectual means than all the Dictionaries and Academies in the world, for preventing our language being infected by any species of corruption, particularly that which seems to threaten it most at present. In a word, whenever a Lexiphanes makes his escape from his usual nest or den, a school or a college,

college, and begins to acquire a reputation, to make a noise in the world, to take upon him, and to treat the rest of mankind as if they were so many boys, or his pupils still trembling under his Ferula, let them instantly fall upon him as the birds fall upon an owl which appears by day-light, and drive him back to his original obscurity and lurking places; in a word, hunt him down without mercy, as I have endeavoured to do by this great unlick'd Cub, who came first in my way, and is indeed the most conspicuous of them all.

ARGUMENT.

MR. J——n or the English Lexiphanes and the Critick meet. After some compliments past between them, Lexiphanes rehearſes his Rhapsody. It contains a rant about Hilarity and a Garret; Oroonoko's adventure with a Soldier; his own journey to Highgate, and adventures there and on the road; his return to London, and lawſuit about his horſe; his walk to Chelſea, where he plays at ſkittles; his being frightened by a calf on his return which he miſtakes for the Cock-lane Ghoſt; his amours and diſappointments at a Bagnio. He is now interrupted by the Critick, who takes him to taſk for his hard words and affected ſtyle, and thinking him mad, applies to a Phyſician paſſing by, who proves to be the Britiſh Lucretius. He repeats a great many verſes, and the Critick gets rid of him with ſome difficulty. Another Doctor comes up, who is the Critick's freind. They talk together upon Lexiphanes's caſe, and other matters concerning taſte and writing. They force him to ſwallow a potion which makes him throw up many of his hard words. The Doctor goes to a conſultation, and the Critick inſtructs Lexiphanes how to avoid his former faults, and write better for the future.

LEXIPHANES.

A

DIALOGUE.

CRITICK. J——N. FIRST PHYSICIAN.
SECOND PHYSICIAN.

CRITICK.

SEE J——N yonder, our English Lexiphanes, marching along with a huge folio under his arm. Some new piece, I'll warrant, in the stile of his Ramblers. I shall be well entertained, if he is in a reading humour; a thing he is often fonder of than many of his hearers.

J——N.

Most happily occurred, my very benevolent convivial associate. Behold. A novel exhibition which is purely virginal, and which has never been critically * surveyed by any annual or diurnal retailer of literature, in this so signal † a metropolis.

* Rambler, No. 10. *critically condemned.*

† I beg leave to observe here once for all, that I do not intend to confine myself to a close imitation
B of

CRITICK.

What! a new romance, or a second *Rasselas* of Abyssinia?

J ——— N.

Without dubiety you misapprehend this dazzling scintillation of conceit in totality*, and had you had that constant recurrence to my oraculous dictionary, which was incumbent upon you from the † vehemence of my monitory injunctions, it could not have escaped you that the word novel exhibits to all men dignified by literary honours and scientific accomplishments, two discrepant significations. The one imports that which you have affixed to it, a romance or

of Lexiphanes's manner of writing only, but propose to shew by example the absurdity of hard words, and affectation in general. For instance, the words *novel* and *signal* are not much used by Lexiphanes, that I remember, but Gordon, in his *Tacitus*, is mighty fond of them. They are here affected, as they generally are in Gordon, yet have been used by some of our best writers, though very sparingly. But bad authors have the same influence on words, that the dregs of the people have upon dress.

* Rambler, No. 141.

† *Rasselas*, *vehement injunctions of haste*. Rambler, No. 26. *monitory Letters*.

fiction,

fiction, such as the tale of Ajut and Annin-gait, or Prince of Abyssinia || ; but that in which I have at present used it, signifies new, recent, hodiernal. And indeed the eye of critical discernment will perceive, that there is a most exquisite elegance in conferring that appellation upon a recent and hodiernal production. But I am afraid that I shall ransack vacuity, and strike out in vain flashes of instruction from the fortuitous collision of happy incidents, * for your intellects are exhausted, † or distorted, ‡ their fortresses are betray'd to rebels, and their children excited to sedition, § and you are now labouring under an intellectual famine, and want the banquet of the lady Pekuah's conversation †.

CRITICK.

Excuse, dear sir, the dullness of my apprehension. But pray what is the subject of this new piece?

|| Tales and romances of our author well known.

* Ram. No. 154.

† Raff. V. 1. p. 16.

‡ Ram. No. 95.

§ Raff. V. 1. p. 120.

‡ Raff. V. 2. p. 94.

B 2

J——N.

J——N.

It is a rhapsody or a characteristical essay, an assemblage calculated to enhance and diversify convivial festivity. But you must understand, that I totally anti-rhapsodize Ashley.

CRITICK.

What then! you don't retail your characters in small quantities, as Ashley his punch, *pro bono publico*? We have them wholesale. But there are many of that name, and I should rather imagine, as 'tis a rhapsody, you mean my Lord Shaftsbury.

J——N.

You aread me aright. And, indeed, this * luxuriant efflorescence of my wit would have been utterly inexplicable to any but one of your sagacity of conjecture, acuteness of comprehension, and facility of penetration †. You are one of those gigan-
tick

* Ram. No. 141.

† This is quite in Lexiphanes's style. He is mighty fond of ending a sentence with three phrases of this sort, for the most part equally superfluous
and

tick and stupendous intelligences who grasp a system by intuition*.

CRITICK.

Well then, give us a sample of your work, that I may not be altogether deprived of so great a feast, for I promise myself it will be as good as a cup of Nectar †.

and insignificant. When he hath done this, no doubt he thinks he hath rounded off the period well, and hath added something to the harmony of its cadence Ram. No. 208. Innumerable examples of this kind are to be met with in his writings. One I found in the very paragraph whence I took the last quotation, *Colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations*. Ram. 208. Another I met with, as I just now cast my eye on the first number of his third volume. *The prejudice of faction, the stratagem of intrigue, and the servility of adulation*. Ram. No. 106. These may very properly be called *Triads*. But sometimes, and when he is disposed to be more eloquent than common, he mounts it up to a *Quaternion*, of which there are likewise many examples in his Ramblers.

* Ram. No. 108. If one could suspect such an original genius as Lexiphanes of being a plagiarist, he hath borrowed *grasp a system by intuition*, from king Phyz, in the Rehearsal, who *grasps a storm with the eye of reason*. Akinfide, our poetical, or rather blank-verse Lexiphanes, has an expression of much the same nature,

*When despair shall grasp
His agonizing bosom.*

Pleas. of Imag. b. ii. v. 491.

† Almost literal from Lucian.

J——N.

Deject then † exaggeratory obloquy below the horizon of your prospects, ‡ without the fervility of adulation afford openness of ears, sedulity of thought, and stability of attention §. But above all || expulser hereditary aggregates and agglomerated asperities which may obumbrate your intellectual luminaries with the clouds of obscurity, or obthurate the porches of your intelligence with the adscititious excrement of critical malevolence.

CRITICK.

Begin boldly, my good friend, there are neither agglomerated asperities nor hereditary aggregates about me *.

J——N.

Consider well how I have conglomerated this atchievement of erudition, the insinu-

† Raffelas.

‡ Ram. No. 2.

§ Here's another Triad *more Lexiphanico*.

|| Gordon's Tacitus.

* In the next place answering this, in the original, Lucian tells Lexiphanes, that he has no vermin about him, neither lice nor fleas; a play upon words which it was impossible to preserve in the copy.

ation of its exordial sentences *, the selection of its diction, and resplendency of its sentiment.

CRITICK.

It must be all that, if yours. But I pray you begin †.

J ——— N.

I shall inchoate with one of its most delicious morsels of eloquence, and shall at

* *Exordial verses.* Ram. No. 158.

† What goes before is a pretty close copy of Lucian, the same conceits and playing upon words as near as the different turn of the two languages would allow. For instance, Lexiphanes tells Lucian, that he antisymphosiazes Aritto, which was Plato's original name, but by which he was little known. In the same manner J ——— n tells the Critick, who, in this dialogue acts the part of Lucian, that he anti-rhapsodizes Ashley, a name at least never used when one speaks of my Lord Shaftsbury. Lucian's Lexiphanes is a pert conceited sop, whereas mine, like his living original, is a grave solemn affected pedant and coxcomb. Lucian's Symposium, as far as we can now know of the matter, is an original. But my Rhapsody is mostly taken from the Ramblers, with some few quotations and parodies from the Elements of Criticism, Night-Thoughts, Pleasures of Imagination, Centaur not Fabulous, and Warton's Essay on Pope. Lucian has jumbled together a parcel of the strangest incoherent stuff and nonsense that can well be imagined. I hope I have equall'd him in this point, however short I may have fallen in other articles.

the same time be curt *. Perpend †, and receive my sayings with a stedfast ear ‡. But I obsecrate that in the interim you would, by a proper secession, facilitate my enjoyment of the light, whilst I, by the fortuitous liquefaction of spectacular lenses, and their concordant adaptation to my poral regions, meliorate and prolong its fruition §.

“ After our post-meridional refection, rejoined Hypertatus, we will regale with a supernumerary computation of convivial

* Elements of Criticism.

† Pistol in Shakespear.

‡ Pleas. of Imag. B. 2. l. 306.

§ 'Tis supposed that in this sentence Lexiphanes means no more than that the critic should step aside while he puts on his spectacles. For some of the hard words, and quaint phrases, consult Rambler, No. 9.

And now Lexiphanes begins to read his Rhapsody, conceived in the following words: *After our post-meridional refection, rejoined Hypertatus, &c.* and continues reading till interrupted by the critic. The fragment here given, without either beginning or ending, is supposed to be only a small part of a larger work; for Mr. J——n tells us, he *inchoates with one of its most delicious morsels of eloquence*. Lucian begins and ends his Symposium in the same abrupt manner, and though it be in itself a matter of perfect indifference, I thought it better to follow the example of so great an original.

ale,

ale, so adapted to exhilarate the young, and animate the torpor of hoary wisdom with sallies of wit, bursts of merriment, and an unintermitted stream of jocularly. From this assemblage of festivity we will unanimously extrude those screech-owls whose only care is to crush the rising hope, to damp the kindling transport, and allay the golden hours of gaiety with the hateful dross of grief and suspicion. Such is Suspirius, whom I have now known fifty-eight years and four months, who has intercepted the connubial conjunction of two hundred and twenty six reciprocal hymeneal sollicitors by prognostications of infelicity, and has never yet passed an hour with me in which he has not made some attack upon my tranquillity, by representing to me, that the imbecillities of age, and infirmities of decrepitude are coming fast upon me. Indeed to those whose timidity of temper subjects them to extemporaneous impressions, who suffer by fascination, and catch the contagion of misery, it is extreme infelicity to live within the compass of a screech-owl's voice. Therefore let us avoid

Suspirius with a studied sedulity, and should we fortuitously meet him in the multifarious confluxes of men, let us repress the solicitude of his advances with a frigid graciousness *.

“ We shall likewise emancipate our convivial association from Mr. Frolick, that disseminator of the knowledge of what is echoed in the streets of London, who takes advantage of reverential modesty with despotick and dictatorial powers of prescribing, and imposes upon rustick understandings with a false exhibition of universal intelligence, catches of interruption, briskness of interrogation, and pertness of contempt †. He thinks us unworthy of the exertion of his powers, or his faculties are benumb’d by rural stupidity, as the magnetick needle loses its animation by approximating the polar climes. Therefore

* For most of the hard words, quaintnesses, and absurdities of style in this paragraph, consult the character of Suspirius the screech-owl, in the Rambler, No. 59.

† For the *delicious morsels of eloquence*, and choice flowers of speech in this and the next paragraph, see the character of Mess. Frolick and Philomides, Rambler. No. 61, 72.

we shall treat him with rustick sincerity, and drive him as an impostor to regions of more credulity.

“ But Philomides shall be welcome to us, who possesses good humour, that subaltern endowment, which is the balm of being, a perennial mollitude of manners, facility of approach, and suavity of disposition.

“ We shall also have the company of Hilarius, who enjoys a flattering and alluring superiority conferred by the powers of conversation, an extemporaneous sprightliness of fancy, and fertility of sentiment. He has applied his faculties to jocularity and burlesque, and his imagination is heated to such a state of activity and ebullition, that on every occasion it fumes away in evaporations of gaiety, and never fails to kindle up a blaze of merriment. Nor shall we even refuse the association of * Gelasimus, who, though his priority is not acknowledged, was the first who gave a full explication of all the properties of the Cartesian curve. His merit introduced him

* Ram. No. 179.

to splendid tables, where he was entangled in many ceremonial perplexities from which all his diagrams could not extricate him, and was sometimes engaged with female disputants with whom his algebraick axioms had no great weight, and to whom he was very little recommended by his theory of the tides, and approximations to the quadrature of the circle. Nor wanted Gelasimus penetration to discover that no charm was more generally irresistible than that of easy facetiousness and flowing hilarity. He therefore came to a sudden resolution of throwing off the cumbrous ornaments of learning, and commencing a man of wit and jocularity. Though utterly unacquainted with every topick of merriment, yet he never fails to laugh whenever he stirs the fire, fills a glass, removes a chair, or snuffs a candle, as laughter he knows is a token of alacrity. Thus his risibility will be kept in incessant exertion by Hilarius's powers of delighting. He will even afford a topick of merriment himself, for those who desire to partake of the pleasure of wit, must contribute to its production, since the mind stagnates without

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out external ventilation, and that efflorescence of the fancy, which flashes into transport, can be raised only by the infusion of dissimilar ideas *.

“ Then when we shall have received a sufficient stream of posterior invigoration, and elevated our powers to a due animation, by the quaffing of our convivial ale, we will refrigerate with an ambulatory circumrotation in the Park, and return homewards with the coruscations of declining day. For the season of the year is now come in when the regions of luxury are for a while unpeopled, and pleasure leads forth her votaries to groves and gardens, to still scenes, and erratick gratifications. For I cannot but suspect, that this month, bright with sunshine and fragrant with perfumes; this month which covers the meadow with verdure, and decks the gardens with all the mixtures of colorifick radiance; this month from which the man of fancy expects new infusions of imagery and the naturalist new

* For the hard words and affected phrases in this paragraph, consult the characters of Gelasimus and Hilarius in the Rambler.

exhibitions of observation ; this month will congeal multitudes into a state of hopeless wishes and pining recollection, where the eye of vanity will, in vain, look round for admiration, and the hand of avarice shuffle cards, in a bower, with inefficacious dexterity*.

“ In relation to myself, I will recede to my garret. For the gaiety and sprightliness of dwellers, in elevated regions, is probably owing to the encrease of that vertiginous motion with which we are carried round by the diurnal revolution of the earth. The powers of agitation upon the spirits are well known, and nothing is plainer, than that he who towers to the fifth story, is whirled through more space by every circumrotation, than another that grovels upon the ground floor. Indeed, I think a frequent removal to various distances from the center so necessary to a just estimate of intellectual abilities, that I

* The above rant is, I believe, taken almost word for word from the Rambler, though, for want of a good Index, I cannot at present point out the number.

would propose that there should be a cavern dug, and a tower erected like those which Bacon describes in Solomon's house, for the expansion and concentration of understanding, according to the exigence of different employments or constitutions. Perhaps, some that fume away in meditations on time and space in the tower, might compose tables of interest at certain depth, and he, that upon level ground, stagnates in silence, or creeps in narrative, might, at the height of half a mile, ferment into merriment, sparkle with repartee, and froth with declamation. I have discovered, by a long series of observations, that invention and elocution suffer great impediments from dense and impure vapours, and that the tenuity of a defecated air, at a proper distance from the surface of the earth, accelerates the fancy, and sets at liberty those intellectual powers which were before shackled by too strong attraction, and unable to expand themselves under the pressure of a gross atmosphere. I have found dullness to quicken into sentiment in a thin ether, as water not over-hot boils in a receiver partly

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ly exhausted, and heads to appearance empty, have teemed with notions on rising ground, as the flaccid sides of a football would have swelled out into stiffness and erection. All which perhaps, I may reveal to mankind in a treatise on barometrical pneumatology*.”

“ Thus concluded Hypertatus his elaborate dissertation on convivial Ale, Hilarity, Merriment, and a Garret. He then shewed me a most encomiastick veneration, overwhelmed me with a lusciousness of eulogy, and bestowed on me magnificent remuneratory honours †, for the prime ra-

* In order to understand the beauties of this paragraph, consult Hypertatus's letter to the Rambler, upon the conveniencies and advantages of a Garret. This is one of Mr. J——n's *chef d'œuvres*, both for stile and matter. Besides, which is not very frequent with him, he makes an attempt in this place at wit and humour, but with his usual success. Of this however more hereafter.

Hitherto Hypertatus, Mr. J——n's friend and correspondent, is supposed to be the speaker in the Rhapsody; and the praises of *convivial* ale, *hilarity*, *merriment*, and a *garret* are all put in his mouth. Lexiphanes himself relates from henceforth what follows in his own person.

† Rambler, No. 104.

dical excellencies, perspicacity of remarks, and versatile plastick imagination † displayed in my Ramblers. He added that, on that account, he imagined, when I composed them, I had quitted my garret, and ascended into the cock-loft. He called me EXCELLENT RAMBLER ||!

“Afterwards he requested me to accompany him in his ambulatory projects, but I transmitted him a declinature * on account of the pain which I suffered from some artificial excoriations which I had contracted on a very respectable part of my body, by the severe succussions of a conductitious steed when I was taking a tollutation to Highgate.

“I had laid the strictest monitory injunctions on Oroonoko, my swarthy boy of Ethiopian race, to hie before as my precursor †, and bespeak a vespertine collation at a Caravanferay, whose master was most re-

† Warton's Essay on Pope. || Ibid.

* Robertson's History of Scotland, Vol. 2d. See the story of *Mas David Black*.

† Warton, ut supra.

nown'd for culinary science and economical accomplishments†. But the Renegado disobeyed my most absolute commands, and as he was passing through Field-Lane, his olfactory powers being affected by odoriferous steams, lured him to linger in the shops of culinary retailers, and banquet upon savory sheep's heads, prime pigs pettytoes, and plump plumb-pudding. His powers of manducation and digestion being now fatiated, and being satisfied of my firm adherence to a rational and equitable adaptation of penalties to offences, and under no terror of death, the strongest and most operative of prohibitory sanctions*, the thirsty fever that raged in his throat, hurried him,

† The above phrases are in Cornelius's Letter to the Rambler, No. 51. One proof among innumerable others, that all Mr. J——n's female correspondents are as great Lexiphaneses, and as fond of hard words as himself. Whoever considers how carefully Steele and Addison varied their style according to the different characters they have introduced, cannot but wonder at the great reputation the heavy pedantick uniform Ramblers have acquired and still maintain.

* Ram. No. 114.

with

with all the ardor of præcipation, to the sign of the man arrayed in vernal livery. Replete with pecuniary impudence, from having withheld the change of a quarter image of our most amiable sovereign, which I had yesterday given him in order to require a sausageary refection with an intention of resuscitating and invigorating my powers which were languid and debilitated with sedulity of application in abstracting an octavo from my folio dictionary, he sat down on a bench succumbing under lassitude and indigestion, called for beer with all the vociferation of impatience, and thus began :

T'inebriate at brisk porter's fountain head,
And reeling thro' the wilderness of joy ;
Where sense runs savage, broke from
 reason's chain,
And sang false peace.

Night Thoughts.

“ For, behold, on a vicinary bench, fate
a plunder-fed* soldier, between whom and

* Blackwell court of Augustus.

Oroonoko, in the course of the vivacious loquacity of their evening computations† arose an unextinguishable feud, a mutual vigilance to entrap, and eagerness to destroy, a continual exacerbation of hatred, and incessant reciprocation of mischief‡. This Thrafo assuming a fastidious tumour of dignity, with negative rudeness and obliquities of insult, effused his invidious sarcasms, and descants on the negro darkness of Oroonoko, who now verging towards a state of inebriation, his intellects became distorted with argumental delirium, the controversy was soon inflamed to the highest pinnacle of exacerbation, and then he bestowed reiterated percussions on the intellectual regions of this plunder-fed soldier. Thus commenced a circulatory war*. The soldier essayed to resist, but in vain, for he was soon necessitated to succumb, if not under the mental, at least under the manual superiority of Oroonoko. The breast of this discomfited militant was now corroded with envy, for which, when it has

† Ram. No. 133, 141.

‡ Ram. No. 185.

* Gordon's Tacitus.

attained its height, perhaps, no remedy will be found in the gardens of philosophy: however, she may boast her physick of mind, her catharticks of vice, or lenitives of passion†. He willingly suffered the corrosions of inveterate hatred, and gave up his thought, to the gloom of malice, and the perturbations of stratagem. In ſurt, he delated Oroonoko to a press-gang then in the vicinity, and got him conveyed into a tender, from which I relieved him not, till after frequent solicitations and many frustraneous applications of interest.

“Thus was I constrained to take a solitary excursion. Moreover my palfrey was spavinated, so that being compelled to slog and calcitrate with all the ardour of impatience, he agitated me with such severe and desultory commotions, that I suffered a total perineal excoriation, which not emollients could medicate, the powers of medicine alleviate, nor the skill of physicians elude. But this, my sole misfortune, at that time was not*. The spavination of my

† Ram. No. 2.

* *War at that time there was none.* Thus Gordon, the first affected author, who seems to have met with encourage-

my steed being now meliorated by the warmth † of exercitation; and by the due alternate application of the curbing, flogging and spurring powers, having reduced him to an equable and moderate equitation, I continued tollutating along with the most placid tranquility, meditating the subject of a vernal speculation. But all of a sudden, my powers of attention were arrouzed, my meditations suspended, and my concatenation of seminal ideas totally dissipated by a violent conqwasation of the umbrageous foliage above, and a manifest concussion of the earth below. 'Tis, indeed, wonderful, as with all the powers of descriptive poetry, the British Lucretius* expresses it,

With

encouragement from our great men, chuses to translate the following very simple passage in Tacitus.
Nullum ea tempestate bellum.

† Vid. Lucian.

* Some of Mr. J——n's friends may here object, that his sentiments, with respect to this poet, are misrepresented, and that no where in his writings hath he either commended him, or called him the British Lucretius. But I answer, that I am as far from imputing to him any of the opinions advanced in this Rhapsody, as I am from fathering upon him any of the adventures contained in it.

'Tis

With what accumulated force,
 Th' impetuous nerve of passion urges on,
 The native weight and energy of THINGS.
 Pleas. of Imagination.

"The cause of this convulsive motion in nature, was a congress between a bard of signal celebrity, and one of those nymphs who enjoy a perpetual susceptibility of occasional delight. They were in the height of the complicated joy, eagerly co-operating and mutually accelerating the intended event*, just as I happened to be ambulating along. My steed alarmed and terrified at these tumultuary phenomena, alternately plunged down his head, reared

'Tis a sufficient warrant for me, if some authors of note in the world have praised A———e, and stiled him our Lucretius. Besides, I have not that despicable notion of Mr. J———n's taste, especially in poetry, some people affect to have. If we may judge of it, from what he hath himself done in that way, he must despise the other as heartily as I do. His imitations of Juvenal are truly excellent, and as much superior to the Pleasures of Imagination, as the Ramblers are inferior to the Tatlers and Spectators. The truth is, Mr. J———n has too much good sense to admire, and too great skill in the *politics of literature* to applaud any body's nonsense but his own.

* Essay on Pope. Elem. of Criticism.

up

up on his posteriors, and at last dejected me with a headlong precipitation into a muddy ditch, and then, with an incredible acceleration of velocity, vertiginated along the arable, impregnated with a grain, which in England feeds the horses, but in Scotland supports the people*. Annihilation and existence were now so nearly equiponderant, that they lay in the trepi-

* The above is the definition given of oats by Lexiphanes in his very facetious dictionary, and is, no doubt, intended by him for a sarcasm against the Scotch; a people he is said to hold in high contempt, and, in my opinion, very justly too, for most of them, I have been told, are his great admirers, and so much his very humble servants, that they think it even an honour to be abused by him. For my own part, the more I study this exalted genius, the more I am forced to admire him. For instance, one should naturally expect wit and humour in periodical Essays, Novels, and Romances; but read his Ramblers and Rasselas, you meet with nothing like it, nothing but what he calleth, *stern philosophy, delourous declamation, and dictatorial instruction*: whereas consult his dictionary, and there you have it with a vengeance. In short, he is author of the first witty dictionary that ever was heard of. This, however, is not all. Besides, being witty and facetious, 'tis also national, personal, political, and patriotic; in a word, every thing but what it ought to be. For proof of which, beside the aforesaid article of oats, consult his definitions of Excise, Favourite, Gazetteer, Pension, Pensioner, Revolution, &c.

dations

dations of the balance. I risqued a sub-aqueous voyage *, a total interruption of reciprocal respiration, a † comminution of life, in curt, a forisfamiliarion out of the universe. But our poet's powers or commiseration being aroused at such a compassionate object as I then exhibited, suffered not his ardour for a reciprocation of pleasures and multiplying stimulations to preponderate over his feelings of humanity. He hied with all the ardour of solicitude to deliver me from those stagnated waters of collected impurity, where a frigorifick torpor had already begun to encroach on my veins ‡. He stoop'd sublime §, and at last reinstated me, and when my powers of observation were resuscitated, exhibited an unusual appearance to my view. A ruddy plenilunar resplendent countenance, a vigorous athletic herculean form, arrayed in a rusty black coat, and dirty buck-skin breeches. Sensible of the universality of

* Ram. No. 109.

† Ram. No. 108. Elem. of Criticism.

‡ See Nouradin, the merchant's dying address to his son Almamoulin. Ramb. Vol. 3. p. 80.

§ Pleas. Imag. B. 2. L. 268.

the cause of my present infelicities, I roused up all my particular powers of dolorous declamation, and warbled my groans with uncommon elegance and energy *. I effused the following ejaculation against the whole species of nymphs who enjoy a perpetual susceptibility of occasional delight. †

“ May Lais, Thais, Limax, Lupa, Succuba, Quadrantaria, Obolaria, Euriole, Sthenio, Medusa, Erinnyes, Megæra and Typhphone—May all these, and all such ladies, whether sick or sound, high or low, of blood and title, or ditch and dunghill, natives foreign or infernal—May this glorious group of Torrismond’s angels, these Gorgons, furies, harpies, leeches, Syrens, centaur-making Syrens! paid or unpaid, keeping or kept, on fire or quenched, genevaed or citroned, in closet or cellar, in tavern, bagnio, brothel, roundhouse, bride well, or newgate.—Oh may they cease, from this hour, to sing or dance, smile or frown, please or plague, pray or swear, our British, unbritish youth, manhood or age,

* Ramb. No. 109.

† Ramb. No. 111.

out of their senses, health, estates, reputation, human nature, and hopes of heaven!

“And these enchantresses laying aside their spells, may the bewitched of Great-Britain recover their pristine form, as Circe’s herd, at the prayer of Ulysses. At the touch of my disenchanting pen, may they leap out of their hides for joy; and laying hold on their long deserted definition of man, reason and two legs, walk uprightly for the future.

“Rejoice with me, my friend! for do I dream, or didst thou not observe? Didst thou not hear? *Intonuit lævum*. As the dark cloud which caused it is vanished, and a flood of light rushes in; so shall it fare with thee; I see thy dawning reason; I see the break of my moral day. And what I see, I shall relate; and what I relate, tho’ strange, let no man disbelieve*.

“Concluding thus my ejaculation, the bard rejoined.

Ah! what, my friend, has private life to do
With things of public nature? Why to view

* This rant of inimitable nonsense, contained in the above three paragraphs, is taken word for word from a celebrated modern. Vid. *Centaur not fabulous*.

Would you, thus cruelly those scenes unfold
Which without pain and horror to behold,
Must either speak me more or less than man
Which friends may pardon, but I never can §.

“ Having thus reciprocally rhapsodized, we disparted. The bard retired behind the umbrageous hedge, finally to accomplish his interrupted repercussions of communicated pleasures ||. As for myself, I was compelled to ambulate to Highgate, in order to evaporate the humidity of my habiliments, and contemper the malignity of frigorifick torpor with culinary irradiations. The Caravanferay to which my errattick steps were accidentally conducted, was the emblematical sign of fecundity and consequential cuckoldom at Highgate. There, according to the wonted modes and formalities of the mansion, I became obligated by a double sacramental stipulation : in the first place, never to imbibe small beer, whilst I could acquire convivial ale, unless the former were endued with higher powers of sensitive gratification. In the next place,

§ Vid. *Churchill's Conference.*

|| Ramb. No. 148.

never to solicit an erratick gratification from the menial fair, if I could obtain a reciprocation of delight * with the mistress, unless I believed the hand-maid possessed of greater powers to kindle the ardour of enterprize, set difficulties at defiance, stimulate perseverance, and prevent the remission of vigour, when standing in *procinctu*, on the point of obtaining the recompence †.

“ The ceremonial perplexities attending the conjuration, being finally adjusted, I entered into converse with an Hibernian of signal erudition, who sate tranquilly puffing the fumigations of the Calumet in an angle of the fuliginous hexagonal apartment. While we were universally engaged in the vivacious loquacity of our evening computations, he requested me to ejaculate a sentimental effusion. I bibulated ‡ the salubrity of our own amiable sovereign, the safe parturition of his transcendental consort, and the happy encrease of the sons

* Ramb. No. 101.

† Ramb. No. 207.

‡ A cant word of the same sort is put in Lexiphanes's mouth by Lucian, on much the same occasion. See his Lexiphanes. I must own, however, that I do not remember my hero has used it.

and daughters of Britannick royalty §. With difficulty my learned friend represented his risible powers at this complicated simplicity of my sentimental lore. But he dignified my unimportance, and corrected my inaccuracies ||. For when it came to his turn, he effused the most venerable and respectable monosyllable, the American belligerant, the sedulous domestick damsel, the lamb-resembling fair one, the Book-binder's consort, and the Mendicant's benediction.

“ But the perspicacity of my intellectual powers, grasped not by intuition the recondite sense of those sentimental allegories. Wonder is a pause of reason, a sudden cessation of the mental progress. I disentangled not complications, nor invigorated my confidence by conquests over difficulty, but slept in the gloomy acquiescence of astonishment, without efforts to animate enquiry, or dispel obscurity. Therefore I contented myself with the gaze of folly, and resigned the pleasure of rational contemplation to more pertinacious study, and more active

§ *Rasselas*, Vol. 1. p. 2.

|| *Ramb.* No. 139.
faculties.

faculties*. For all my scientific acquisitions are at last concatenated into arguments or compacted into systems, and nothing henceforth can be to me so odious as opposition, so insolent as doubt, or so dangerous as novelty. †,

“ In the sequel of our evening computations, the sentimental Hibernian, with a torpid risibility, spontaneity of production, and inflation of spirit, bursting into absurdity ‡, exhibited a variety of other allegories, infinitely more complicated than the former, but of all which he gave such explications, that he raised the easy facetiousness and flowing hilarity of our fellow computators to the highest pinnacle of exaltation. Bursts of merriment, and flashes of transport broke forth like conuscations of lightening, and we disturbed the neighbourhood with the vociferations of our applause.

* Ram. No. 137.

† Ram. No. 151. I am inclined to believe, that in this sentence, Lexiphanes has unknowingly drawn his own character.

‡ Ram. No. 124, 131, 195.

“ As we had now obtained the sublimest pinnacle of merriment, it was all of a sudden intercepted *, our gaiety darkened, and a totality of confusion introduced by the exhibition of a violent altercation between a Grocer of signal celebrity, corpulency, and opulency in Cheapside, and a raw-bon’d, hard-faced, high-cheeked Caledonian, who had arrived thus far in his erratick progress from his native barren heaths, to the fertilized meadows circumjacent about this metropolis, in the investigation of preferment. We were all holding our sides, totally convulsed with universal laughter, when the Grocer emitted a thundering roar of posterior vociferation. The convivial associates were startled as at the sudden and unexpected explosion of ordnance ; and the Caledonian scratching his head, and appall’d gazing the corpulent presence † over his left shoulder, addressed him thus in the vulgar dialect of his provincial barbarism. *Are thae the*

* Raffelas.

† Appall’d, I gaz’d the godlike presence. Pleas. of Imagination, B. 2. l. 237.

*manners of you braw London fok? giff it be
sae, I wifs I was e'en at my ain hame agen.*
The Grocer vouchsafed not a reply, mani-
fested not the least signal of villatick bash-
fulness, but elevating his left leg with all
the compofure of a calm deliberation, ex-
hibited a fecond vociferation, louder and
more fonorous than the former. At the
fame time, though it had neither efaped
our auditory, nor our olfactory nerves, he
clenched his fist, gave the bench before
him a collifion, eyed the Caledonian with
an emphatical fignificance of gaze, and be-
ing a true-born Englifhman, as well as a
fignal patriot, cried out, with a blaft of
eruclation, *Lord B—*. The Caledonian
became now the object of undiftinguifh-
ed merriment. The fierce illapfe of paffion
roufed the whole fabrick of his mind*,
and his native ferocity being highly exacer-
bated, he vented not his wrath in a reci-
procation of reproaches, but having instan-
taneous recurrence to fiftical ratiocination,
beftowed a violent percuffion on the cor-

* Pleasures of Imagination.

pulent Grocer's nasal promontory, which, in a moment, suffused with a sanguinary streams his plenilunar resplendent countenance, and tarnished his gold laced waistcoat.

“ Ferocious instillations of discord were now transfused by a rapid dissemination through the bosoms of the convivial and hitherto pacifick compotators. The Grocer debilitated by the imbecility and decrepitude of age, and the exercitation of his pristine bruising powers having been long restrained by the unwieldiness of corpulency, succumbed under the furies of force with the listlessness of languor and despondency of inferiority. But a Foe to Cattle, tho' a friend to a Grocer, and of equal celebrity for patriotick principles and liberal exhibition of posterior vociferation, challenged and attacked the two-legged Consumer of Oats. Nor wanted either Butcher or Consumer, Friends, Allies and Confederates. The former was assisted by the auxiliar virtues and subsidiary aids of patriots, anterior eructators, and posterior vociferations; and the latter by courtiers,

courtiers, his fellow consumers of Oats, and joint musicians on the Caledonian violoncello. Entirely inefficacious and totally frustraneous were all the mediatory intercessions and reconciliatory interpositions of myself, and the sentimental Hibernian, for a suspension of hostilities, and a general pacification. Finding the hearts of the antagonists irremediably exacerbated with the corrosion of hatred, and reciprocation of mischief and reproaches, we concluded to repose in the shades of neutrality, and avoid a fortuitous percussion under the shelter of distance.

“ Thus a combat royal ensued, a circulatory war commenced. Various were the changes, vicissitudes and perplexities from the mutability of fortune, and victory long hung doubtful in the trepidations of the balance and fluctuations of uncertainty *. At last, by the fortuitous supervision and spontaneous intervention of the bard, in whom constellated † with equal lustre all bruising and poetical powers, who fatiated

* Ramb. No. 295.

† Ramb. No. 201.

of his susceptible nymph, had just made a relinquishment, the patriotick fists became preponderant. And now had a total discomfiture of the risible Oat-consumers ensued, had not the Caledonian who began the civil discord, and intestine conflagration, alarmed two Highland militants then quartered in the Caravanferay by his idiomatical vociferation. *Is there nae help here for poor Scotland?* bawled he out with reiterated efforts. At last the variegated militants appeared, making flaming circulatory irradiations with their brandished broad swords, and emitting terrible sacramental denunciations of mortal purpose, of instant vengeance, death and destruction. The combatants immediately surceased, and the Grocer, all terror-struck with the dreadful exhibition, occumbed in a swoon. Our olfactory powers were now overcome by the odoriferous steams that issued from him in a most exuberant effusion, and afforded us a conjectural glimpse || of what had been transacted under his fe-

moral habiliments. A parley then ensued between the Murtherer of Bullocks and Consumer of Oats, and preliminary articles for an amicable congress were finally adjusted. The Foe to Cattle obtested that he entertained no antipathy to the Caledonian emigrant or his country ; and the two-legged Consumer of Oats deprecated forgiveness for assaulting his convivial associate the Grocer, and above all, for infringing the *Claim of Rights*, the *Magna Charta* of all true-born Englishmen, with respect to the liberal public and unrestrained exhibition of their powers of anterior eructation and posterior vociferation ; and promised with all the solemnity of stipulation, that he would never offend in a point of that tender and delicate concernment for the future.

“ Thus a perfect harmony, and general tranquility were happily restored. And a lasting and permanent pacification, of which the learned Hibernian and myself had been the mediators, and were now the Guarantees, was finally concluded, on terms by which the respective honours and interests

ests of the belligerent powers were equally consulted. A reciprocal and most amicable intermixture and conqassation of hands, with the most respectful professions in the most sonorous periods of everlasting amity, past now between the Cow-killer and Oat-meal-eater. They vociferated for supernumerary * pots of porter, with all the ardour of impatience, which were introduced and evacuated with all the silent celerity of time †. Finally, of this civil commotion, this national dissention, no consequential traces remained, but excremental effusions in the Grocer's femoral habiliments, cerulean sanguinary suffusions all around the Caledonian's luminaries, and a pruriginous, herpetical, and incurable eruption of pustules in the digitary interstices, and over the brachial regions which the Murtherer of Bullocks had contracted by too frequent, prolonged and intimate contact with the corresponding members of his novel confederate and convivial

* Ramb. No. 109.

† Ramb. No. 2.

associate, the two-legged Consumer of Oats *.

“ The

* It is said, foreign gentlemen are at present much addicted to the study of our language. A thing I am heartily sorry should take place, till the taste of the public, at least, with respect to the authors we admire, be a little amended. They may not only entertain a very contemptible opinion of us as to that article, but also be led to conceive the strangest notions of our laws, customs and manners; and what is yet more unlucky, conclude that the natives of one of our three kingdoms are really no better than irrational, irrisible, four-legged animals, and considered by their fellow-subjects, and the legislature in no other capacity. I am led into this train of Reflection, by the following advertisement, which I met with the other Day in the Daily Advertiser.

“ The Consumers of oats, within the cities of London and Westminster, and Borough of Southwark, and who subscribed towards the expences of obtaining the last act of parliament for empowering the justices in London to grant a certificate of the price of oats, four times a year, are desired to meet their Committee, at the Sun-Tavern, in St. Paul’s Church-yard, this day, being the 29th of December, instant, at five o’clock in the afternoon, on special affairs.”

Now, whoever considers the definition of oats, given by Lexiphanes in his dictionary, and quoted in page 23d of this dialogue, cannot conceive any thing to be meant by *Consumers of Oats*, in the general and comprehensive sense of the expression, other than *English horses or mares, and Scotch men or women*. ’Tis certain, a foreigner who studies our language grammatically, and who must naturally look upon this work of our renowned Lexicographer, as the standard of our tongue, and have recourse to it, in order

“ The sentimental Hibernian, and myself, left them in the height of their amicable computations and simultaneously returned

order to learn the strength and idiom, and peculiar meaning and energy of our words and phrases ; 'tis certain, I say, that such a person in such a case, could understand nothing else by it. What then must we think of the above advertisement ? will he not naturally conclude, that 'tis an ordinary thing in London, for Horses and Scotch men to meet at a tavern, like friends and acquaintances, over a bottle ; to appoint committees, out of their respective bodies, to consult together on their special affairs ; and jointly to address such a venerable society as their worships, the Justices, about their nearest and most important concern, namely the *price of Oats, their common food.*

Ambiguities of this kind, which may be productive of very troublesome mistakes and inconveniences, are great imperfections in a language, and ought carefully to be guarded against. It would be labour thrown away to petition the great Lexiphanes, to alter one tittle, or jota of his dictionary, and to accommodate it to our weakness and prejudices ; barely to suggest the expediency of such a measure, would be high treason against his *Lexicographical powers* and authority. I must therefore content myself with beseeching the ingenious compilers of the Daily Advertiser, the next time they have occasion to insert such an advertisement, that they would have the goodness to add, to *Consumers of Oats*, the epithets of *Two-legged, Risible or Rational*. Yet, on second thoughts, even this honourable addition will not altogether do the business. For I humbly apprehend no Englishman can be said, in the proper and obvious sense, to be a consumer of oats.

No,

turned to Gray's-Inn, in the periodical itinerant vehicle. And there I had not long been, when Megalonymus, the Attorney, inchoated an action against me, at the suit of the mercenary owner of the conductitious palfrey, which, in the course of his vertiginous gambols, had taken an erratick

No, they are consumers of the whitest of wheat-flour, adulterated only with lime and allum, and some few other poisonous materials. That, however, is nothing. Therefore in the room of *Consumers*, I would have them substitute *Buyers* and *Sellers*, which will effectually answer the purpose.

The advice I have given, I have myself followed. For wherever the Caledonian, the hero in the national quarrel occasioned by that *true-born Englishman* and *signal patriot the Grocer*, is mentioned as a *Consumer of Oats*, I have constantly added the distinction of *Two-legged* or *Risible*, that he might at no time be mistaken for a Horse, his brother *Consumer*. But I have not ventured to honour him with the addition of rational, as apprehending the whole being put in Lexiphanes's mouth, that might be out of character. For he is known to hold the northern inhabitants of our island in such sovereign contempt, that it is much to be questioned whether he reckons them an order of beings superior to Bears or Baboons. However Their property of two-leggedness can never be disputed, and I hope many of them have shewn their *Powers of Risibility*, by laughing very heartily at Him. For in fact, I know not a more laughable, a more ridiculous object in the universe, than such a solemn, self-conceited, haughty, overbearing, pedantick old-school-boy, as my Lexiphanes.

progress

progress to such a distance, and with such velocity, that he could not be re-apprehended. The bard, conscious that the violence of his repercussions, and the impetuosity* of his impassioned nerve, was the pristine cause of all my complicated infelicities, and comick calamities†, has procured me the surety of his two booksellers. My council is Pertinax‡, who being early initiated in a thousand low stratagems, nimble shifts, and sly concealments, contracted an intellectual malady which infected his reason, and from blasting the blossoms of knowledge, proceeded in time to canker its root. At riper years, he caught the contagion of vanity, and distinguished himself by sophisms and paradoxes till his ideas were confused, his judgment embarrassed, and his intellects distorted. But growing weary of a perpetual equipoise of the mind, he prescribed a new regimen to his understanding, and being at length recovered from his argumental delirium,

* This word is mightily commended for sound, &c. in the Elem. of Criticism. † Ramb. No. 176.

‡ See Pertinax's Letter, No. 95.

with which he was wont to darken gaiety, and perplex raticionation, he now applies his powers with great sedulity to the acquirement of legislative science. The trial makes its approximation with the silent celerity of time, notwithstanding

The laws delay, the proud man's contumely,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
Which patient merit of the unworthy takes.

"I had no sooner effused this ejaculation to Hypertatus, than Misocapelus, Hermeticus, Hymeneus, Captator, Eubulus, and Quisquilius * came up and † conjoined us. It was impossible for me not to succumb ‡ under the conjunct importunities of so many illustrious associates, who all simultaneously obsecrated me to accompany them in an ambulatory project to the wakeful harbinger of day § at Chelsea, and there to recreate and invigorate our powers with buns, convivial ale, and a sober erratick game at skittles. . At length I adhibited

* Characters or correspondents of our Author in the Rambler.

† Elements of Criticism.

‡ Robertson.

§ In English the sign of the Cock.

my consent, though, with an extremity of reluctance, owing to the implacability of the pain of my fundamental excoriations, which were so highly exasperated by the adhesions of my everlasting thicksets, that despair grasped my agonizing bosom, and I dreaded their termination in a fistula. But the pleasing powers* and grateful honours of their conversation, and above all, converting my thoughts to the ambition of aërial crowns,

And superlunary felicities†, obtunded the acrimony of my dolorous situation.

“ Misocapelus† had passed his official state behind the counter of a haberdasher; he had applied all his powers to the knowledge of his trade, so that he quickly became a critick in small wares, and a skilful contriver of new mixtures of colorifick variety. In the fourth year of his officinalship he paid a visit to his rural friends, where he expected to be consulted as a master of sumptuary knowledge, and oracle

* Akenfide.

† Night Thoughts,

† See Misocapelus's Letter, No. 116, 123.

of the mode. But, unhappily, a colonel of the guards, with a careless gaiety and unceremonious civility; and a student of the Temple, with less attraction of mein, but greater powers of elocution, so abstracted all his auditors while he was exhausting his descriptive powers in a minute representation of a lord mayor's triumphal solemnity, that thenceforth he could exhibit no other proofs of his existence, than naming the toast in his turn. After the death of his elder brother, who died of drunken joy, he commenced gentleman, but with great infelicity of attempt. For with a double quantity of lace on his coat, a forbidding frown, a smile of condescension, a slight salutation, an abrupt departure, and a vertiginous motion on his heel with much levity and sprightliness, he has not attained his resolution of dazzling intimacy to a fitter distance, or inhibiting its approaches with its usual phrases of benevolence. He has had successive circumrotations through the characters of Squire, Critick, Gamester, and Foxhunter, but has at last degenerated into that of a Taylor; in which capacity

capacity he has been recommended to all her numerous circle of acquaintance, by the mischievous generosity of Ferocula, whom he once assisted, in the presence of hundreds, in an altercation for six-pence with an hackney coachman.

“ * Hymenæus, a curious indagator † into feminine secrets, had long been an unsuccessful hymeneal solicitor, and seemed to lie under the penal severity of being doomed to frozen celibacy, and of being excluded by an irreversible decree from all hopes of connubial felicity. He breathed out the sighs of his first affection at the feet of the gay, the sparkling, the vivacious Ferocula, for he looked with veneration on her readiness of expedients, contempt of difficulty, assurance of address, and promptitude of reply ‡. He paid his subsequent addresses to the deep-read Misothea, the inexorable enemy of ignorant pertness and puerile levity, who scarcely condescended to infuse tea but for the linguist,

* For the hard words and Lexiphanick beauties of this paragraph, consult the letters signed Hymenæus and Tranquilla, in the Rambler.

† Night Thoughts.

‡ A Quaternion.

the

the geometrician, the astronomer, or the poet. She was only to be gained by the scholar who could overpower her by disputation. Amidst the fondest ardours of courtship she would call for a definition, and contemned every argument for fixing the day of his felicity, that could not be reduced to regular syllogistical argumentation. Thirdly, he solicited connubial conjunction with the calm, the prudent, the oeconomical Sophronia, but surely it might be forgiven him if he forgot the decency of common forms, when from an excess of her oeconomical solitudes * she discharged her maid Phillida for breaking six teeth of an ivory comb, which had cost her three half crowns. Soon after, an invitation to sup with one of his busy hymeneal solicitors, made him, by a concerted chance, acquainted with Camilla. He could not suppress some raptures of admiration and flutters of desire, and was easily persuaded to make nearer approximations. But he found that she made such

* Rambler, No. 162.

generous advances to the verges of virility, that he thought not his quiet and honour to be entrusted to such audacious virtue, which could not but be fugacious †, as it was hourly courting danger, and soliciting assault. His next mistress was the nicely tricked Nitella, but he was disgusted at the superstitious regularity of her apartments, the occasionality and ambitiousness of her dress, and want of familiarization to her own ornaments. And now his evil destiny conducted him to a Charybdis, whose moderate desires for seals and snuff-boxes, rising by degrees to a rapacity for gold and diamonds, effectuated a superaddition of one more, to six and forty frustaneous hymeneal solicitors. Lastly, Imperia took possession of his heart, but kept it not long. He left her to grow wise at leisure, or continue in error at her own expence. Thus he had hitherto passed his life in frozen celibacy. His friends indeed told him, that he dressed up an ideal charmer in all the radiance of perfection, and then entered the world to gaze for a similar excellency in corporeal beauty.

† Sterne's Sermons.

But surely it was not madness to hope for some terrestrial lady unstained. At last, through the intervention of the Rambler and without any danger of malignant fascination, or multiplying stipulations, he was coalited * in a connubial conjunction with Tranquilla, whose ears had been made delicate by riot of adulation †, who had danced the round of gaiety amidst the murmurs of envy and gratulations of applause, been attended from pleasure to pleasure by the superciliousness of grandeur, the levity of sprightliness, and the glitter of vanity ‡, and seen her regard solicited by the obsequiousness of gallantry, the gaiety of wit, and timidity of love §. Their prospects were such, that they spread themselves into the boundless regions of eternity. But they were doomed to give one instance more of the uncertainty of human discernment, and the fragility of connubial hopes of felicity. The extreme delicacy of Tranquilla had been somewhat offended at a warty excrescence on the tip of Hymenæus's little finger;

* Hume's History.

† Ramb. No. 145.

‡ Ramb. No. 119.

§ A double Triad.

and that of Hymenæus in totality disgusted at a small mole obumbrated with a cerulean exuberance of capillary honours on the inside of Tranquilla's femoral regions a little above the dexter genuflexion. They now became dissocial, and their children were foris-familiated. And Hymenæus unable to repress the accumulated invigoration of his powers, has grown enamoured of the generick * habit and interdicted happiness of incidental repercussions, in the selection of which he is determined by the vibratiuncles and armature of Hermeticus's artificial magnets.

“ Hermeticus has for a long time applied his corporeal and mental powers to the wonders every day produced by the pokers of magnetism and wheels of electricity. He has fallen eleven times speechless with electrical shocks, he has twice dislocated his limbs, and once fractured his skull in essaying to fly, and four times endangered his life by submitting to the transfusion of blood. But he has now entered into a zealous competition for magnetical fame.

* Elements of Criticism.

Owing to a hint of the Rabbi Abraham ben Hannafe, he has discovered a method of detecting connubial wickedness, and preserving the connubial compact from violation. It is an armature of a particular metallick composition, which concentrates the virtue, and determines the agency of magnets, to discover, by the nature and quality of their reciprocating vibratiuncles all the different modifications wherein breaches of connubial fidelity and the laws of chastity had been consummated.

“Eubulus is now labouring in the wheel of anxious dependance. His uncle, who supplied him with exuberance of money, and maintained him in pecuniary impudence that he might learn to become his dignity when he should be made Lord Chancellor, which he often lamented that the increase of his imbecillities and decrepitude was very likely to preclude him from seeing, had frequently harrassed him with monitory letters. But Eubulus at last resolved to teach young men in what manner grey-bearded insolence ought to be treated. He therefore, one evening,

took his pen in hand, and after having roused his powers to a due state of animation with a catch, wrote a general answer to all his monitions with such vivacity of turn, such elegance of irony, and such asperity of sarcasm, that he convulsed a large company with universal laughter, kindled up an undistinguished blaze of meriment, raised an unintermitted stream of jocularities, disturbed the whole neighbourhood with vociferations of applause, and five days afterwards was answered, that he must be content to live upon his own estate.

“Captator had an unresisting suppleness of temper, and an insatiable cupidity for riches, yet he never felt the stimulations of curiosity, nor ardour of adventure. Therefore, when the sailor proposed a voyage, he fell sick under his mother’s direction, who employed such superfluity of artifice, that she was with difficulty persuaded not to endanger her health with nocturnal attendance. This deceit was discovered to the sailor by his mother’s handmaid, when he made her amorous advances, and solicited her with hymeneal stipulations. The

Squire

Squire was likewise disgusted, and he now depends solely on the chambermaid; and if the old woman should likewise at last deceive him, is in danger at once of beggary and ignorance.

“ Quisquilius has brought inconveniences on himself by an unextinguishable ardour of curiosity, and an unremitted perseverance in the acquisition of the productions of art and nature. Yet he does not wish to stimulate the envy of unsuccessful collectors by too pompous a display of his scientifick wealth. These accumulations have not been made without some diminution of his fortune; he has transferred his money from the funds to his closet, and has at last mortgaged his land, to purchase thirty medals which he could never find before. For curiosity trafficking with avarice, the wealth of India had not been enough. The cruelty of his creditors has made an expilation of his repository, and he will be constrained to disseminate, by a rapid sale, what the labour of an age will not re-collect and re-assemble. He has made me a present of two vials, in one of

D 3

which

which is dew brushed from a Banana, in the gardens of Ispahan ; in the other brine, that once vertiginated in the Pacifick Ocean, for which he desires no other recompence, than that I should recommend his catalogue to the publick.

“ Such were my convivial associates *; and while we continued our viatorial progression through the royal perambulations, we fortuitously occurred that celestial meditant Mr. James Hervey, in whom exuberance of magnanimous sentiment and ebullition of genius † are so signally constellated. Our occurrence was near the gate heretofore denominated from a nobleman on whose productions there is no stamp of genius ‡, but which are in reality

* For these four characters, see Ramb. No. 199. 26, 198, 82

† Ramb. No. 129.

‡ Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. This is the character given by Warton, in his Essay on Pope, of that Nobleman's writings. I own that Lexiphanes does not in so many Words, call them pages of *Inanity*. He applies that expression to Walsh. But he does what is equivalent. He says, in his Idler, I think, posterity will wonder how such men as Sheffield and Lansdowne ever came to have any reputation. What must posterity think of the present age, in which this dogmatical pedant has obtained so great a reputation!

pages of inanity. But it is now, with greater propriety of appellation, dignified from our most amiable sovereign's transcendental consort. Without pre-supposing impossibilities of anticipating frustration, we solicited his company with the sonorous* periods of respectful profession, that while we should be disporting with the bowl and pins, he might be agglomerating meditations on the pensile spiky pods of the blooming religiosos of the gardens; but he transmitted us a declinatute in the monosyllable of coldness, for he was going to effuse the fair creation † of his praying powers at the bed-side of a penitential nymph in Lewkener's lane. However, he gave us a promissory note he would subjoin a descant on the creation ‡.

“At length we arrived at the place of our original destination, without any intercepting § interruption; only Hymenæus and Hermeticus would have diverted into the fountain in the Five Fields, in order to

* Ramb. No. 194.

† Pleas. of Imag. B. 2. l. 38.

‡ Hervey's Meditations.

§ Raffelas.

try some magnetical experiments on an ambulatory nymph, who seemed perpetually susceptible of occasional delight. But they were restrained, as well by the unexpected appearance of Tranquilla, who just then tollutated along in a rotatory vehicle, as by the unanimous simultaneity of our prohibitory supplications. On our ingress into the scene of skittleary contention, we expedited ambassadors with plenary powers to procure us buttered buns, charming Cheshire cheese, tart tit-bit tartlets, rare ripe radishes, and recent rolls *; we enhanced our reciprocal felicity by quaffing convivial Burton; and we disported with the bowl and pins. At last, after various vicissitudes and revolutions of a vehement contention, and ardent competition for skittleary reputation, the totality of the reckoning devolved upon Quisquilius. Quisquilius,

* Alliteration; a figure Lexiphanes seems to be sometimes very fond of, though I do not say he has ever carried it to that excess of affectation, in which it is found in the passage referred to, or in the foregoing *savory sheeps-heads, prime pigs pettytoes, and plump plumb-pudding*; but I thought it not amiss, to give into the *Caricatura* a little now and then, a thing I have seldom had occasion of doing.

being devoid of pecuniary stores, offered to deposite as a mode of hypothecal security, the stings of four wasps, that had been taken torpid in their winter quarters. But the landlord rejected the proffer with an indignant sneer of pecuniary impudence. Quisquilius vainly alleged, with all the powers of deprecating rhetorical persuasion, that the wasps from whom the stings had been extracted, cost him the annual rent of the farm where they had been caught, when under the influence of frigorifick torpor. The unfeeling governor of the caravanseray replied not, but with a trite saying of proverbial vulgarism; A fool and his money are soon parted. At last, after a tedious altercation, Misocápelus, instigated by the ramifications of private friendship, disbursed the symbol.

“When now we had with some difficulty effectuated a relinquishment of this dignified scene of skittleary contention, a dusky and cerulean darkness had began to obumbrate the superficies of the constellated regions, and to diminish the horizon of our prospects. We ambulated homeward, aid-

ed by the declining coruscations of a crepuscular glimmering. In our viatorial progression, we were now opposite the Portobello, where latrocinary Homicides wont to lurk, and make incursions on unsuspecting way-farers, and comminations of their purses and lives. Terrification seized me from the dreariness of the scene, and the reflection that the ghosts of the murdered might now be hovering round the fatal places where their terrestrial existences had been comminuted. Eubulus, that infidel and insolent contemner of grey-bearded wisdom, observing the tremulous commotion of my nerves, and entertaining a conjectural glimpse of my mental situation, apprehended me by the sleeve, vociferating with all the semblance of terror: Behold an apparition, the ghost of a murdered traveller! I adverted my luminaries directly forward, and gazed an object seemingly of immense magnitude, and arrayed in a vesture of shining radiance. I suffered a reduplication of horrifick terrors, and again Eubulus exclaimed; 'Tis FANNY! 'tis Miss FANNY herself, the very identical

tical ghost of Cock-lane! she is come to punish and terrify a sceptical unbelieving world. Hearest thou not, her percussions of negation, her repercussions of affirmation, and her scalpations of indignation *!

“ Succumbing now under an accumulation of horrors, actuated as if I had been a meer involuntary mechanist, and having interjected a circumstantial pause †, I thus ejaculated.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

Be thou a spirit of health! or goblin damn'd!

Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell!

Be thy inents wicked or charitable!

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape

That I will speak to thee! I'll call thee FANNY!

Maid! mistress! injur'd fair! what may this mean

That thou dead coarſe again, in winding ſheet,

Reviſit'ſt thus the glimpe crepuſcular.

* It ſeems, that in the language of the famous Cock-lane Ghost, a ſingle knock ſignified *No*, a double one *Yes*, and ſcratching imported *displeasure*. 'Tis pity *Miss Fanny* ſo ſoon diſcontinued her viſits to this world, otherwiſe it may be preſumed, Lexiphanes, who, 'tis ſaid, was a very diligent and attentive ſcholar, would have become as great an adept in the dialect of Ghosts, as Homer was in that of the Gods, or as he himſelf in his own mother tongue. It might, in time, have furniſhed our great Lexicographer with materials for a dictionary of the *Language of Spirits*.

† Elements of Criticiſm.

Making

Making it hideous ; and us FOOLS of NATURE
So horribly to shake our dispositions
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls,
Wherefore, what may this mean ?

“ Whilst thus ejaculating, Hypertatus with that magnanimity of sentiment, that undauntedness of resolution, and that intrepidity of courage, derived from his habitation in the elevated regions of a garret, approached the place where the apparition seemed to lie, fixed in torpid immobility. But at his approximation it started like a guilty thing, and ran vagiffating along the champain, as if it had been the youthful masculine offspring of a Tauro-vaccineal conjunction.

“ At this unexpected exhibition, my fellowcompotators were totally convulsed with universal laughter ; and even Hypertatus himself, my most amicable convivial associate, could not altogether repress the instantaneous motions of merriment *. As for myself, I reprehended Eubulus, with the sonorous vociferations of anger, and told him that the precipitation of his inexperience ought to be shackled by a proper

* Ramb. No. 176.

timidity †; and that though he had answered his uncle's monitory letters with such vivacity of turn, such elegance of irony, and such asperity of sarcasm, that he had left him henceforth to live upon his own estate; and that though he had retorted the irony of his patron Hilarius, equally renowned for the extent of his knowledge, the elegance of his diction, and the acuteness of his wit with such spirit, that he soon convinced him his purpose was not to encourage a rival, but to foster a parasite *; I told him, I say, that he should not with impunity derogate from my dictatorial importance, remuneratory honours, and accumulations of preparatory knowledge, with the pertness of puerility, the levity of contempt, and the derision of ridicule. Eubulus, though he could hardly articulate for a suffocation of risibility, declared with profound sacramental obtestations, that he had himself laboured under similar powers of deception. I believed him not, and threatened to convict him of the

† Ramb. No. 159.

* Ram. No. 26, 27.

tortuosity

tortuosity of his imaginary rectitude by manual syllogisms, fistical applications, and baculinary argumentation.

“ But Hypertatus recalled us from eccentricity *, and by an extemporaneous sprightliness, a happy interruption, and antidotal intervention, repressed our animosity, composed our differences, and restored our hilarity. He lured and roused us from a vivacious loquacity, a torpid risibility, and languishment of inattention †, by effusing, in a strain of peculiar eloquence, an elaborate dissertation on the multiplicity of business, astonishing intellectual powers, and accelerated train of perceptions ‡ in the mind of the dwarfish drawer, Mr. John Coan. It is not to be conceived, said he, what length a habit of activity in affairs will carry some men. Let a stranger, or let any person to whom the sight is not

* Ramb. No. 151.

† Ramb. No. 124.

‡ The rhapsody drawing now near a close, I have *exhausted* all my *powers*, in bringing together, in this and the two foregoing paragraphs, a string of Mr. J——’s favourite figures of speech, namely, of senseless unmeaning *Triads*, all in the true Lexiphannick taste, and most of ’em really to be found in his *Ramblers*.

familiar, attend the drawer at the Cock, through the labours but of one day, during a season of skittle-playing : How great will be his astonishment ! What multiplicity of in-and-out-of-door-businefs, what profound attention, and what elaborate application to matters of Beer-drawing ! The train of perceptions must, in this great diminutive, be accelerated far beyond the common course of nature. Yet no confusion nor hurry ; but in every reckoning the greatest justness and accuracy. Such is the force of habit ! How happy is man to have the command of a principle of action, that can elevate him so far above the ordinary condition of humanity * !

“ On

* This rant of Hypertatus, only reading *Chancellor of Great Britain, for Drawer at the Cock, law-businefs, for in-and-out-of-door-businefs, session of Parliament, for season of Skittle-playing, and government, for beer-drawing*, is almost word for word a rant in the *Elements of Criticism*, in praise of a late Chancellor. The original was composed, as the margin informs us, in 1753, the parody in 1763. The reader may consult what the same author says a few pages afterwards, about ridicule and parodies. He justly observes, that a parody may be successfully used either when it does or does not ridicule the original passage it refers to. The foregoing is a parody of the former sort.

“ On our ingreding the royal walks we became diffocial and disparted. Misocapelus, Captator, Eubulus, and Quisquilius properated before, with a rapid oscitancy. The Squire to his first floor, the

fort. For, as it happens, the thoughts, such as they are, may be applied with the same truth and propriety to either personage, whether the Chancellor or the Drawer, provided they be alike expert in their respective occupations. And it likewise affordeth us a very apt and happy instance to shew how much ridicule is the test of truth and justness of thought; which by the bye this very ingenious writer proveth in the chapter referred to, and in a clearer and conciser manner than I remember to have met with. The reason is what follows. Lord K—— confines the praises of a very great man, I believe, to qualities, such as mere habits, a quick succession of perceptions, and transition from one sort of business to another, qualities that are common and in equal or greater perfection amongst the lowest vulgar, and employed by them in the meanest and most insignificant pursuits. Whereas had he celebrated him for the difficulty and importance of his acquirements, his inflexible integrity and unceasing labours in the service of his country and in the duties of his high and exalted office, I think in that case the keenest and most licentious ridicule might be safely set at defiance, provided however there were no quaint affected or Lexiphanick expressions, such as the *retarded* or *accelerated train of Perceptions*, &c. This reflection appears to me so obvious, I wonder it escaped the author, especially one who hath shewn such depth of thought and admirable penetration in unfolding the most intricate turning and windings of the human heart, understanding and constitution.

rest to their garrets. I lingered behind, detained by my fundamental malady. Hymenæus, Hermeticus, and Hypertatus preserved a similar pace, curious to gaze the venal charms of ambling nymphs. Amidst the various conflux of such peripateticks, Hymenæus had a fortuitous occurrence with Misella. He accosted the wandering fair, he simulated * a passion for her, and invited her to Haddock's. Hymenæus, Hermeticus and Misella, entered boldly at the ever open-gate. But Hypertatus and myself observed some very respectable booksellers engaged in an ambulatory project under the piazza's vault. Those worthies, who, according to a dignified author of signal celebrity for critical and paradoxical powers †, are even in this enlightened age, neither the worst judges nor the least rewarders of literary merit ‡, had engaged Hypertatus, with vehement injunctions of

* The World. This is, perhaps, the only Lexiphanick word in the elegant papers that go by that name.

† See W——n's preface to his edition of Shakspear.

‡ Witness the high price given for *Paradise Lost*.

haste,

haste to write a full and candid confutation of all the false reasonings, absurd misrepresentations of facts, and insidious insinuations, contained in the last political pamphlet, which, if we may trust the veracity of fame, was his own production; and they had me likewise under terms of strict obligation, to compose a perpetual commentary on the immortal productions of the divine Shakespear*; therefore, fearful of their collision, and elusive of their gaze, by a low stratagem, nimble shift, and sly concealment, we made our entry at the postern gate in Hart-street. We conjoined our associates in an apartment whence all the evils of life seemed extracted and excluded, and we heard the dance of festivity, and the song of mirth. While we were evacuating a goblet of mantling arrack, Hermeticus made a magnetical experiment on Misella, which, though it was performed with a magnet of

* When this was written, Mr. J——'s edition of Shakespear was only in expectancy. It hath since been published, and even in the judgment of the public, so much prejudiced in his favour, has fully verified the Proverb, *Parturiunt montes*.

the most sluggish and inert species, during the last diurnal circumrotation, she had reciprocated civilities with four and twenty different ascensors. Misella retired to an adjoining apartment, whither Hymenæus soon followed her. But in the mean time he descanted very philosophically, and effused many sage reflections on the fugaciousness of connubial felicity, and instability of human enjoyments. On making his exit, he appropriated to me the following lines, out of Young's divine poem, the Night Thoughts.

Come, my ambitious, let us mount together,
To mount the Rambler never can refuse.

“After a short delay, some incidental occurrences afforded me a conjectural glimpse that Hymenæus was ascending in the abruptness of extacy*. Sympathy affected me with similarity of sensations and unisonal vibrations of mind. My own ascensionary powers, which erst were relaxed with numbness, congealed with frigorifick torpor, and debilitated with the consequential languor

* Ramb. No. 117.

of an ardent contention and zealous competition for skittleary fame, received a temporary influx of sympathetical, momentary invigoration. The drowsiness of hesitation* being thus wakened into resolve, I dispatched an expert and skilful plenipotentiary in quest of one of those nymphs who enjoy a perpetual susceptibility of occasional pleasure. Hypertatus undertook the cure of my intellectual malady. He laid before me the tortuosities of imaginary rectitude, the complications of simplicity, and asperities of smoothness; he represented, that the softest bloom of roseate virginity repels the eye with excrescences and discolorations; he attempted to awaken the powers of dislike, raise an artificial fastidiousness at the coarseness of vulgar felicity, and fill my imagination with phantoms of turpitude, naked skeletons of delight, pains of pleasure, and deformities of beauty†. But he had not the address to administer, nor did he know with what vehicles to disguise the catharticks of the soul. At last

* Idler.

† For this sentence, see Ram. No. 112.

the ambassador of love returned introducing Perdita. Hypertatus continued still to harass me with monitory injunctions, and deter me with prohibitory sanctions; but gazing the meretricious presence, whose charms would rouse the old to sensibility, and subdue the rigorous to softness, I began to entertain a conjectural glimpse, that Hypertatus was practising arts of supplantation and detraction, and that he was instigated by the corrosions of envy to poison the banquet which he could not taste, and to blast the harvest which he had no right to reap. Therefore, that he might not intercept the regular maturation of my schemes, I shook off the drowsy equilibrations of undetermined councils *, and carried Perdita to a private apartment.

“And now ye, who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope, who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow;

* Ramb. No. 111.

attend to the history of the AUTHOR of *Rasselas*, prince of Abyssinia †

“As soon as the necessary preliminary articles for an amicable congress were finally adjusted to the mutual satisfaction of the contracting parties, Perdita eagerly co-operated to ripen barren volition into efficacy and power ‡. But alas! such helpless destitution, such dismal inanity, such gloomy privation, such impotent desire! the faculties of anticipation slumbered in despondency, but the powers of pleasure mutinied not for employment §; and vain were all her fascinating charms, and equally vain all my artificial stimulations to effectuate a proper and adequate reciprocation of civilities. For the orbicular repositories of my powers, and testimonials of my majestick forms——

CRITICK.

Have done, Mr. J——n, for God's sake have done. We have had enough of ascending and reciting. Besides, I guess

† *Rasselas*, Vol. i. p. 1.

‡ *Ramb.* No. 116.

§ *Ramb.* No. 133.

what follows is neither fit for you to read nor me to hear. This, however, is not all I find fault with. Where the D—l! have you collected all this trash of hard words? from what magazine or repository have you raked together these perverse terms and absurd phrases, wherewith you have bespattered me, who never did you any wrong, at so unmerciful a rate? Some, I see, are of your own invention; for others you must have ransacked the old musty volumes of former times, justly disregarded when first written, and now deservedly forgotten. The rest I perceive you have gleaned up, with infinite pains, from Greek and Latin, from scholastick writers, and books on the abstruse sciences. And you think you have done a mighty pretty feat, that you have performed an eminent service to learning, when you have wriggled in over head and shoulders, a new-fashioned long-tailed word, what in your own phrase I would call a *vermicular* word, or a dark term of art, without considering whether it be proper to the subject, suited to the capacity of your readers, or indeed whether it be an English word

word or not. You are the unfittest person of any I know for what you have undertaken, to compile a dictionary. Though 'tis indeed no wonder you should be employed by booksellers in such a work.

Besides, you are wholly ignorant of what is the main part, and makes the chiefest excellence of stile; I mean the choice of words. For no where have you erred so grossly as in your *Ramblers*, notwithstanding you have such admirable models before you, in the writings of Steele and Addison, whom you have been so impudent as to call your great predecessors. What would they say, were they to rise from the dead! what opinion do you think they would entertain of the present age, that can tamely bear such a comparison!

I have heard your skill in lexicography to be highly extolled: But cannot imagine what you would understand by it. I am assured you know nothing of the true spirit of the English tongue, which delights in words of one, two, or at most of three syllables derived from the old Saxon stock; and doth not willingly admit any Latin
words

words whatever, at least in the common stile, unless they come to us through the channel of the French, and have been long, if I may so express myself, denizons among us. But you, without any discernment or distinction, have huddled in all the Latin words you could scrape together, to which you could by any means affix an English termination.

You really seem to me possessed with a sort of madness. 'Tis in my opinion a melancholy. And that windy vapour, or rather watery humour which puffs you up, and makes you look so round and fair, is, in truth, the worst symptom of your distemper. 'Tis not impossible you may have many admirers in the present times, who are either ignorant of your calamity, or equally smitten with the same disease. For aught I know, some may give you the name of the excellent Rambler, and may join you in calling the productions of those incomparable wits, Sheffield and Lansdown, pages of inanity, one of your d—m—d execrable Latin terms, and another of those numberless evils with which you have so

E

pestered

pestered me for this hour past. But trust me, these must be pedants like yourselves. Besides, their applause cannot be disinterested. They either look for return, or praise their own resemblance in you. All men of good taste and judgment, take my word on't, laugh at you, pity you, and hold your writings on the score of their solemn and affected foppery in high contempt.

Truly, Mr. J——n, you appear to me a very unhappy person, who have not one real friend in so large a city, and among so numerous an acquaintance, not one, who, in the course of so many years, has had the honesty to inform you of the dangerous way you were in, or the generosity to clear you of that monstrous gathering of impure trash which will certainly burst you asunder one time or other. On the contrary, it seems from your vanity and self-sufficiency, they have flattered you, and told you, you were in a good confirmed state of health, though you were all the while in the most deplorable situation.

For

For my own part, I thought at first to have laugh'd at you ; but that torrent of hard words you poured out upon me all at unawares, quite stunned and overwhelmed me at last. They made me very drunk and sick, I grew giddy, and should actually have vomited, had I not interrupted you. Truth is, I shall not reckon on being my own man again, till I have thrown up every syllable I have heard from you. Would to God I could see Dr. Monro : he has been busied all his life-time, in looking after crazy, crack-brain'd fellows like yourself. He may possibly do you service, provided your case lie not beyond the reach of medicine.

Well, I see a gentleman coming towards us, whom I take, by his dress, to be a physician. It is not Monro. But whoever he be, 'twill do no harm to consult him.

Sir, presuming you, from your appearance, a physician, though I have not the honour of being known to you, I make bold to consult you on the case of my friend Mr. J——n here, who is extremely ill with

pestered me for this hour past. But trust me, these must be pedants like yourselves. Besides, their applause cannot be disinterested. They either look for return, or praise their own resemblance in you. All men of good taste and judgment, take my word on't, laugh at you, pity you, and hold your writings on the score of their solemn and affected foppery in high contempt.

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Sir, presuming you, from your appearance, a physician, though I have not the honour of being known to you, I make bold to consult you on the case of my friend Mr. J——n here, who is extremely ill with

the disease of strange words. Not to mince the matter, but let it rest between you and me, he is taken with a sort of madness. Be so good as to order something for him, and I'll warrant you, if ever he recover his senses, you shall be liberally rewarded for your trouble.

FIRST PHYSICIAN.

When shall the laurel and the vocal string
 Resume their honours ? when shall we behold
 The tuneful tongue, the Promethean hand
 Aspire to ancient praise ? Alas ! how faint,
 How slow the dawn of beauty and of truth
 Break the reluctant shades of Gothic night
 Which yet involve the nations ! Long they groan'd
 Beneath the furies of rapacious force * ;

Of

* The reader cannot but observe the different manner in which I have treated the two Lexiphanes. Mr. Johnson's matter and sense is sometimes so excellent, and his reflections now and then so just, and at the same time so uncommon, that it hides, in some measure, the absurdity of the stile which becomes, on that account, the more dangerous. I was therefore obliged to *parody* him, and in order to shew his hard words and affectation in a more glaring and ridiculous point of view, apply them to the meanest, the most ludicrous and phantastical objects I could well think on. But such a conduct was by no means necessary with A——de our poetical Lexiphanes. His words, and especially his phrases,
 are

Of at the gloomy north, with iron-swarms
 Tempestuous pouring from her frozen caves,
 Blasted th' Italian shore, and swept the works
 Of liberty and wisdom down the gulph

Of

are generally so execrable, and his meaning, where any can be pick'd out, always so trifling ; in short, he has *imbibed* so much of Plato's nonsense, but so little of his *gracious manner*, as I think he somewhere calls it, that I concluded bare and those even faithful quotations from him, were the very best exposure of the ridiculousness and futility of his composition.

The above is, in my opinion, one of the least exceptionable passages in his whole rhapsody. This is doubtless giving him fair play, and we shall now examine it by the rules, I will not say of criticism, but of common sense. In the first and third lines, we have no less than four enigmas or riddles, every jot as hard as that of the Sphynx, though I don't say they require an Oedipus to expound them. Before a common reader can understand them, he must either be told, or recollect the story of Apollo and Daphne, that Apollo was the God of poetry, that the laurel was one of his favourite *insignia*, and that poets used to be crowned with it at publick solemnities, or when they rehearsed their works. By the *vocal string*, one may easily understand musick, instrumental only, and even in that case a *metonymy*, a part for the whole. I confess myself somewhat at a loss about the *tuneful tongue*. Its best and most obvious meaning is poetry ; but we had the *laurel* before ; and our *British Lucretius* can never be guilty of such gross and needless *tautology*. Therefore if he has any meaning at all, a thing however not very frequent with our author, he must mean vocal musick

Of all devouring night. As long immur'd
 In noon-tide darkness by the glimmering lamp,
 Each muse and each fair science pin'd away
 The fordid hours : while foul, barbarian hands

Their

or singing. I shall not pretend to determine, whether *ancient* or *modern singing* have aspired to the greatest degree of praise ; but this I know, that the moderns have been at infinitely more pain to procure good fingers. For I never heard that the ancients went to that excess of luxury and refinement in musick as to deprive the male fingers of the *virile powers*. It had been no loss to poetry, whatever it might have been to physick, if the Doctor's father had aspired to modern praise as a finger.

But the most puzzling task is the *Promethéan hand* ; if, however, we happen to recollect the old fable of Prometheus, who molded a man of clay, and stole fire out of heaven to animate him ; we may, perhaps, give a shrewd guess, that *statuary* is meant by it.

Such an ordinary poet as Virgil, having occasion to mention statuary, contents himself with doing it, in this dull and simple manner.

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera ;

Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus,

Which Dryden, a translator, only fit for such an author, renders in a strain equally insipid.

Let others better mould the running mass
 Of metals, and inform the breathing brass ;
 And soften into flesh a marble face.

Yet it may be observed, that the fable of Prometheus, being an article in the publick religion, Virgil might have used this *enigma* with a much better chance of being understood.

Having

Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
 And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
 At last the Muses rose, and spurn'd their bonds,
 And wildly warbling, scatter'd, as they flew,

Their

Having thus expounded the riddles, let us see what is next to be done. The question is asked, when shall *singing* and *statuary* aspire to ancient praise? by which he either understands the praises of antiquity, or the praise those arts obtained in the times of antiquity. The first is downright nonsense, the last is obscurely, quaintly and affectedly expressed. It is also asked, when shall *poetry* and *fiddling* resume their honours? Pray, did the Doctor ever read that a poet and a fiddler (though in Homer's time the two professions were joined in one) were ever seated on a bench like a brace of trading justices, and stiled their honours and worships? Or would he have them honoured so in our days; and have he and signor Giardini, any ambition to succeed their worships Welch and Fielding? But, perhaps, he means only to enquire when they shall be honoured and respected as formerly, but expressed in his usual quaint Lexiphanick manner.

The stuff which follows about *beauty* and *truth*, that in this line are *dawning*, and in the next *groaning*, though here another ambiguity arises, for 'tis difficult to say, whether 'tis the *nations* that *groan*, or the two pretty little misses, *beauty* and *truth*, that lie crying and blubbering under the *furies* of *force*, but I think the latter interpretation more agreeable to our author's manner; I say, the stuff that follows is so abstracted and remote from the common thoughts and expressions of men, that 'tis only proper for his absurd rhapsody, and could have place no where but in his own phantastick imagination.

Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclufa's bowers
 To Arno's myrtle border and the shore
 Of soft Parthenope. But still the rage
 Of dire ambition and gigantic pow'r,
 From public aims and from the busy walk
 Of civil commerce, drove the bolder train
 Of penetrating science to the cells,
 Where studious ease consumes the silent hour,
 In shadowy searches and unfruitful care.
 Thus from their guardians torn, the tender arts,
 Of mimic fancy and harmonious joy,
 To priestly domination and the lust
 Of lawless courts, their amiable toil
 For three inglorious ages have resign'd,
 In vain reluctant : and Torquato's tongue
 Was tun'd for slavish pæans at the throne
 Of tinsel pomp : and Raphael's magic hand
 Effus'd its fair creation to enchant
 The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes
 To blind belief.

But 'tis really wasting time and paper to criticise
 such an author. Besides a sensible reader wants no
 criticism upon him, and those who admire or can
 even with patience read him, will not be the better
 for it. Reasoning from any principles would by as
 much thrown away upon them as upon Whitefield's
 followers, who are equally edified and affected by
 the words Samaria or Mesopotamia, pronounced
 with a certain twang, and by the most pathetick dis-
 courses on repentance or a future state.

CRITICK.

I've made a confounded mistake here. 'Twas well I did not give him a fee, as I was once thinking to do. This Physician is madder than the patient, and has more need of prescription. What he spouts forth should be poetry by the sound: I mean blank verse. But I don't understand one word on't. Doctor, I see you are just now got into the clouds, where, by custom, time out of mind, people are freed from the slavery of talking sense. I beg you'd descend from your present altitudes, and endeavour to earn the fee I promised you.

FIRST PHYSICIAN.

Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
 Amid the vast creation; why ordain'd
 Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
 With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame:
 But that th' Omnipotent might send him forth
 In sight of mortal and immortal pow'rs,
 As on a boundless theatre, to run
 The great career of justice; to exalt
 His gen'rous aim to all diviner deeds;
 To chase each partial purpose from his breast;
 And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,

And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain,
To hold his course unsalt'ring, while the voice
Of nature calls him to his high reward,
Th' applauding smile of heav'n ? Else wherefore
burns

In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope,
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession ? wherefore darts the mind,
With such resistless ardour to embrace
Majestic forms ; impatient to be free,
Spurning the gross controul of wilful might ;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils ;
Proud to be daring ?

CRITICK.

I ask pardon, Doctor, for having interrupted you. I see you are very busy at present. I shall take an opportunity, when you are more at leisure, to wait on you with the patient.

FIRST PHYSICIAN.

Wait awhile,

My curious friends ! and let us first arrange
In proper orders your promiscuous throng.
Behold the foremost band ; of slender thought,
And easy faith : whom flatt'ring fancy sooths
With lying spectres, in themselves to view
Illustrious forms of excellence and good,
That scorn the mansion. With exulting hearts

They

They spread their spurious treasures to the sun,
And bid the world admire ! but chief the glance
Of wishful envy draws their joy-bright eyes,
And lifts with self-applause each lordly brow.
In number boundless as the blooms of spring,
Behold their glaring Idols, empty shades
By fancy gilded o'er, and then set up
For adoration. Some in learning's garb,
With formal-band, and sable tinctur'd gown,
And rags of mouldy volumes. Some elate
With martial splendor, steely pikes and swords
Of costly frame, and gay Phœnician robes
Inwrought with flow'ry gold, assume the port
Of stately valour : list'ning by his side
There stands a female form ; to her, with looks
Of earnest import, pregnant with amaze,
He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms
And sulph'rous mines, and ambush : then at once
Breaks off, and smiles to see her look so pale,
And asks some wond'ring question of her fears.
Others of graver mien ; behold, adorn'd
With holy ensigns, how sublime they move,
And bending oft their sanctimonious eyes,
'Take homage of the simple-minded throng ;
Ambassadors of heav'n !

CRITICK.

This is past all sufferance. Patient Griz-
zel herself could not endure such a hus-
band. How shall I manage to get rid of
this

this poetical fop. I had best quarrel with him on pretence he affronts me by brandishing his fist, and making mouths in the fury and extacy of his rehearſal.

FIRST PHYSICIAN.

What, when to raiſe the meditated ſcene,
The flame of paſſion, thro' the ſtruggling ſoul
Deep-kindled, ſhows acroſs the ſudden blaze
The object of it's rapture, vaſt of ſize,
With fiercer colours and a night of ſhade ?
What* ?

* The reſt of this paſſage is as follows :

Like a ſtorm from their capacious bed
The ſounding ſeas o'erwhelming, when the might
Of theſe eruptions, working from the depth
Of man's ſtrong apprehenſion, ſhakes his frame
Ev'n to the baſe ; from every naked ſenſe
Of pain or pleaſure, diſſipating all
Opinion's feeble cov'ings, and the evil
Spun from the cobweb faſhion of the times
To hide the feeling heart ? then nature ſpeaks
Her genuine language, and the words of men,
Big with the very motion of our ſouls,
Declare with what accumulated force
Th' impetuous nerve of paſſion urges on
The native weight and energy of things.

I have often admired this ſublime piece of nonſenſe, and endeavoured to find out its meaning ; but it hath hitherto baffled the utmoſt exertion of my *intellectual powers*. Whoever ſhall give a conſiſtent explication of it, and in a few words, for I bar a commentary ; *Erit mihi magnus Apollo*.

CRITICK.

CRITICK.

What, Sir, do you shake your fist at me, laugh at me, and threaten me, all in one breath? Know, Sir, I am not a man to put up with such usage? Besides, Sir, I have very particular business with this gentleman, and if you don't take yourself away, shall make bold to apply that you won't like, to what my friend here calls a very respectable part of your body*.

FIRST

* This language, perhaps, requires some apology, when applied to one, who though a very affected poet, may be, and I doubt not is a very worthy gentleman. As for the poet himself, I can only hope he will look down upon it, with that noble and sovereign disdain so well becoming our modern Milton and British Lucretius, for so he is called. To the publick I make the following excuse, Let the situation of the Critick be considered, one who had never heard of the Poem or Poet, and, taking him for a madman, earnestly desirous to break off the rehearsal, and it will be owned no other expedient could so naturally be thought on. Grant it were a *Dignus vindice nodus*, yet there was no *Vindix*, no *God*, who could be introduced with any propriety. Had the Criticks, indeed, been acquainted with the allegory which

Old Harmodius went to teach

His early age,

he might have pretended to *appal him*, by gazing the godlike presence of the genius of humankind, to lure him away with the charms of the heavenly partner, the sovereign fair, or the gay companion the fair Euphrosyne,
or

FIRST PHYSICIAN.

Thou my prime part profane with desperate toe,
 By heavens, base caitiff, thou shalt be amerc'd ;
 And when in durance vile despair shall grasp
 Thy agonizing bosom, thou shalt learn,
 Then thou shalt learn.——

CRITICK.

Learn ! What should I learn from thee,
 poetical fop ! But consider, Sir, (I won't
 quarrel with this madman if I can help it)
 here's company coming, and sure, were
 you in your senses, you would not be seen
 in such extacy for the world. I beseech
 you go rehearse elsewhere.

A happy riddance faith. [*Exit 1st Phys.*]

But who comes here now ? Another Physician as I live ; with the same garb, equipage, and accoutrements as the last. Pray

or he might e'en have frightened him off with a vision of the son of *Nemesis* the *Tormentor*, the fiend abhor'd, and horrid visage, all *Dramatis personæ*, in that allegory, that quintessence of bombast and unfathomable nonsense.

I have indeed heard some of his warmest admirers own, that allegory to be somewhat dark and obscure, yet they still continued to believe in his perspicuity and sublimity. See the Athenian Creed in Wither-
 spoon's Essays.

heaven

heaven he be not a poet too. . . . It looks very like my good friend and acquaintance, Doctor——. It is he, and next to Monro the very man I wished to meet with.

Dear Doctor, the pleasantest adventure in the world I have to tell you. Here's my friend J——n, our English Lexiphanes; he is very ill indeed, he is terribly afflicted with the disease of hard long-tailed words drawn from the Greek and Latin languages, or terms of art only proper in abstruse sciences, but used by him in common conversation, and in weekly papers, written, like the spectators, for the amusement of ladies; in short, he has made such a hotch-potch of our mother tongue, you would hardly know it again. He speaks as never man spake before him.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Pooh! is that all! court, country and city, the high judicatures of the nation, and the Robin-hood society are all alike infected with this distemper; you meet with such words in speeches from the—— and addressed from both——, you hear
them

them from the grave solemn politician, who harangues by the hour in a certain assembly, and from the weekly disputant, who is silenced at the end of five minutes, by the knock of a hammer. This disease is as catching as the small-pox, no-body escapes it, some even chuse to be inoculated for it; as obstinate as the great ones, it stays with you, and like the Portugueze or Spaniards, who reckon their fashionable evil a mark on gentility, no body takes any pains to get rid of it. But in what part of the world have you been pray, that you did not know all this before?

CRITICK.

Abroad faith, and I'm glad on't, 'that let me escape one infection at least.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

But is this your pleasant adventure?

CRITICK.

No! no: the rant's a coming, as Bays says, 'tis only the *proemial* part of my story, as Lexiphanes has it. You must know,
being

being once so situated, that I had no access to any English books excepting the Rambler, if indeed you call that an English one, and having no better way to employ myself in, I made a hard shift to read through and understand it with the help of a dictionary; for the words, tho' ending like English ones, founded plausibly like Greek or Latin, and were in truth nothing else at bottom. However, it gave me a good opinion of the man's understanding; I saw he had sense and meaning, though strangely wrapt up in a mist of hard words; there was deep observation, shrewd remarks on life and manners, and a good insight into the characters of men. Soon after, on coming to London, I found means to be introduced to his acquaintance, curious to observe more nearly so queer a being, and found him a greater oddity than I could have imagined. He has just now been reading to me, part of a work, which he calls a *novel exhibition, purely virginal, and never critically surveyed*: but such an *exhibition*! Jacob Behmen, Flood, Alexander

ander Ross, all the Rosycrucian Philosophers, in short, cannot match it. After I had stopt his recital, my patience quite worn out by such odious stuff, a prig of a Doctor came by, equipped for all the world, I ask your pardon, Sir, just like yourself; a large wig, his hat under his arm, a black coat, a sword by his side, and a coach following him without a footman behind it. Desirous to cure so valuable a person of a sort of phrenzy or madness *, that rendered all his other excellent

endow-

* The satyr in this place cannot be thought extravagant, or too severe, by those who duly consider that principle in the human mind, whence all faulty and remarkable singularities, whether in dress, behaviour, or language, most commonly proceed; a man's fond and overweening conceit of himself, and ridiculous overbearing contempt of people about him; which is said to be the case with our Lexiphanes. This every sober person must allow to be a sort of madness in disguise; but perhaps too common, as well as too harmless to require a confinement in Bedlam. Moreover I am justified in it by the authority of Lucian, who in all the corresponding passages, ascribes the same distemper to his Lexiphanes, and cures him in the same manner, by a potion originally prepared for an insane patient. Cervantes too, with equal humour and judgment, represents Lexiphanicism, or an admiration of Lexiphanick writings, as the first symptom of Don Quix-

endowments good for nothing. I accosted this Doctor, I desired him to prescribe, and promised him a fee ; but instead of answering like a reasonable creature, or being

ote's madness, and through the whole course of it paints him a compleat Lexiphanes. In a word, the greatest wits in all ages, and in all nations, have concurred, and seem to have taken a peculiar pleasure in making that character the object of their most pointed ridicule. Lucian and Cervantes I have already mentioned ; Rabelais has a very pleasant passage to the same purpose, where Pantagruel meets a Limousin scholar near the gates of Paris, and after hearing him *Lexiphanize* for some time, cures him at last, and brings him back to his native gibberish by a squeeze in the throat ; Butler too, from whom I have taken the motto, describes Hudibras in that character, and in a manner quite new and original. Neither has it escaped Plautus and Shakespear, the one in his *Miles Gloriosus*, and the other in *Ancient Pistol*. I only wonder that Swift has never introduced this character in all his numerous writings. How must it have shone when painted by his masterly pen ! But he appears to have thought it an object too sacred for ridicule, though he has made very free with others seemingly more so ; for he has wrote against the thing, *Lexiphanicism* I mean in a very grave and serious stile. 'Tis perhaps for this reason that Young, who in his old age, or dotage, degenerated into a downright Lexiphanes, having always had a twang that way, calls him, in the essay on *Original Composition*, an *Infantine Genius*. The pompous Pedant too, who is my Hero, for the same cause, I imagine, speaks so slightly both of Swift and Butler in his *Idlers*, not bearing to see the thing he is so fond of exposed by the one, and his own likeness drawn by the other.

awakened

awakened by a subject which commonly makes all Doctors a little attentive, he went on repeating some verses, for, I suppose, he had been engaged in the rehearsal before, which I am sure were every way blank, for I could neither make head nor tail of 'em.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Do you remember any of those verses?

CRITICK.

How the d—l can I, for I did not understand one sentence, not one line. O yes, now I recollect, he invoked the genius of ancient Greece, talked of Greek and Attick Lore, raved about Power's purple robes, and Pleasure's hairy, pooh, I mean flowery lap; then made an hideous ado, about a meditated scene and a flame of passion struggling through the soul, which deep kindled, shews a sudden blaze across, vast of size, with fiercer colours, and a night of shade. Ay, these were some of his last words, for just then —

SECOND

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Ha! ha! ha! By all that's good this must be A —, for I remember something very like it, in his poem on the Pleasures of Imagination, which he calls a *prime subject*, importing most a poet's name.

CRITICK.

Ay, ay, the very same. *Prime* is a great word with him. For being obliged to pretend a quarrel to get free from his nonsense, he dared me to profane *his prime part*, as he called it, and told me *when despair grasped my agonizing bosom, I should learn, then I should learn.* — But this poem, this Pleasures of Imagination, is it of any note, is it held in request, hath it sold, or doth it still lie on the Bookseller's stall?

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

What questions are these? Where have you lived these last twenty years? Hath it sold, or is it in request? Why it hath gone through numberless editions. 'Tis the *prime poem*, and he is the *prime poet* of our age

age and nation. He is admired, quoted, commented upon by our men of modern taste.

CRITICK.

Good God! such men of taste! what age is this we live in! that men should ever admire any thing, especially poetry, which they cannot understand! Yet, perhaps, for that very reason they do it. 'Tis become a strange world, this of ours. Pray heaven I soon get abroad again *.

SECOND

* I had said in a former note, *reasoning would be thrown away on the admirers of this poet*. That this censure may not be thought too severe, I shall here add one observation, obvious to the meanest capacity and applicable to all subjects. It is this. As plainness or perspicuity is the first beauty and greatest perfection in writing, so its contrary, darkness and obscurity, is its greatest fault and deformity. And I shall support it, by the greatest authority, one of them, the English tongue can afford. I mean the famous Burnet of the Charterhouse, who in his preface to the third book of his *Theory*, has the following passage. "As to the stile, I always endeavour to express myself in a plain and perspicuous manner; that the reader may not lose time, nor wait too long to know my meaning, I would not willingly," continues he. "give any one the trouble of reading a period twice over, to know the sense of it; lest, when he comes to know it, he should not think

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Nay, he is stiled our British Lucretius, and even pronounced by our present critics, not inferior to Milton, Dryden, Pope; in a word, all our best poets since the restoration.

CRITICK.

Our British Lucretius! The Roman, if he can be found fault with for any thing, 'tis for being too simple and unadorned *,
whereas

think it a recompence for his pains." If so great a man, writing on the grandest and sublimest of all themes, the original formation of this our World out of a shapeless Chaos, its first destruction by a general deluge, its last by an universal conflagration, and its renovation into a new and more glorious Heaven and Earth, and the final consummation of All Things; if such a man, I say, in such a subject, require plainness and perspicuity, as so necessary and indispensable, what must we think of an ordinary author, who, writing on a common subject, and in poetry too, labours in a manner to be dark, affected and obscure!

* This is pretty nearly Mr. Hume's opinion of Lucretius, in his Essay on *Simplicity* and *Refinement*. He says, in the same place, that an excess in the latter is more dangerous and more to be guarded against than an excess in the former; and adds, that even then, above twenty years ago, there were symptoms of an approaching decline of taste, both in
France

whereas the other, if he has any sense or meaning at all, which, by the way, is very much to be questioned, it is wholly hid under a superfluity of ridiculous fantastick ornaments,

France and England. How truly he hath prophesied, at least with respect to the latter, let the Ramblers, Pleasures of Imagination, &c. justify.

Now I have mentioned this gentleman, for whose character and talents, I entertain the highest veneration, I cannot pass this opportunity of making him an acknowledgement for suffering his illustrious name to appear in the margin, for the most part, in such bad company. But 'tis only for a few words I thought affected, and it was his great and so justly deserved reputation that made me take notice of them at all.

And I would by no means have it thought that I approve or follow the practice of our periodical critics, who, when they discover a few inaccuracies or trivial slips of the pen, nay even of the press, think themselves sufficiently entitled to condemn it. 'Tis certain that the following lines in Horace

*Sed, ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parum cavit natura.* —

could never be more properly applied than to two late historians, Mr. Hume and Dr. Robertson. To the latter of whom a like apology is undoubtedly due, for mentioning *Mas David Black's Déclinature*, which is perhaps the only unjustifiable word in his elegant history. It seems to be a term in the Scotch law, and this author with his usual judgment attributes the corruption of the Scotch dialect to their law, and the pleadings of their Lawyers.

But there are others who have gone thro', as Lexiphanes somewhere says *full as fatiguing a service of celebrity,*

ornaments, that 'tis with great difficulty come at, when you do 'tis good for nothing, and you regret your trouble. He resembles a little dirty ill-looking Baboon, buried under a huge ill-made birth-day suit, and when you have stript him bare of his tawdry covering, you meet with nothing but what disgusts the eye and offends the nose, and every other sense about you. In short, 'tis hardly possible to name two writers whose taste and manner jar so much, and are so directly contrary to one another. But who is the great genius, pray, that hit upon so happy a comparison?

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

A personage of great note, I assure you, one of *signal celebrity* for *critical powers*. He writes on poetry and painting*. You're a great admirer of rhyme, I know, and cannot relish the blank verse at least of our

celebrity, as either of those gentlemen, and who should have appeared oftener in the margin than both, had not the notes and extracts, taken from their writings, been lost, (see the Preface) though I should hardly have troubled them with an apology for the freedom.

* Daniel Webb, Esq;

F

days.

days. But were you to read him, you would soon alter your opinion; he would soon convince you, rhyme is fit for nothing but madrigals, epigrams and acrosticks.

CRITICK.

So he's a warm stickler for blank verse. I thought so. But I sincerely believe this blank verse has been the great corrupter of our taste and language, both in prose and poetry. For my part, I have for some time made it a sort of rule with me, to read nothing of that kind except Milton, whose words, style and measure, are so much his own, and so well suited to the loftiness of his subject, that they set him equally above all criticism and imitation. 'Tis true, I have read Dr. A——— elegant poem on health, as well as a very happy imitation of it, by Mr. D——— on agriculture. They are both simple and natural, and have few or no hard words in them, but for that very reason, perhaps, are less sought for than others written in the same manner. Yet with all the
merit

merit the poem on health undoubtedly possesses, I should think it wrong to liken it * to those noble productions, Buckingham's Essay on Poetry, Roscommon's on translated Verse, and Pope's on Criticism, all didactic poems. Though 'twere granted in every thing else equal, this very circumstance of its being written in blank verse, would give it the disadvantage. That manner does very well in tragedy, whose style approaches nearly to prose; for which reason it must be unfit for every other sort of poetry. Besides, properly speaking, it is no verse at all. Verse comes from the Latin word *vertere*, to turn. Now if there be nothing in the measure which informs the ear when the verses *turn* and *return*, or when one verse ends and another

* I do not mean by what is said above, to insinuate any thing to the disadvantage of Dr. Armstrong's excellent Essay on Health, with respect to its conduct, composition and sentiments. As to these and the classical elegance, purity and simplicity of the style it is, perhaps, equal to any work of the kind in our language. I only intend to give it as my private opinion, that the want of Rhyme is so very essential a defect in a performance of that nature, that hardly all other perfections can make up for it.

begins, it surely does not deserve that title. This is evidently the case with most of our modern blank pieces: did not the compositor carefully place one line of ten syllables under another of the same length, but print them in the usual manner, we should never find them out to be poetry, but should soon be convinced they were bad prose. Whereas, print the ancient Hexameter and modern rhyme as you please, the Dactyle and Spondee on the one hand, and the return of sound on the other, can never suffer the most indifferent ear to mistake.

But I shall not insist much on this topic, seeing it is only a dispute about words. But our admirers of blank verse, complain that rhyme is a bondage, and lays too great a restraint on the poet. This is only saying, in other words, he is no poet at all, or is too lazy to be a good one. The measure of the ancients seem to have been a greater bondage than our rhyme; it was certainly so to Virgil, who has not left one imperfect verse in his Pastorals or Georgicks, though many in his Æneid, which did

not receive his last hand, as we learn from this circumstance, though hardly from any other. However, we do not hear that complaint from any of them. But the truth is, in this very restraint and bondage lies the superior excellence of rhyme. It is great merit, and it gives mighty satisfaction, to overcome a pressing difficulty, and to overcome it in such a manner that no traces of it are to be seen. All the beauty and grace of writing depends on this principle. To choose such words, and place them in such an order, that every common reader shall think he can do the same, till he come to try it, and then finds himself greatly unequal to the task: such a man must needs entertain a higher opinion of the writer who does this, than of him in whom he perceives pains and labour at every step he takes. On the other hand, a person acquainted with the hardships of composition, must receive infinite pleasure from a piece that seems to have been finished at one happy touch, without correction or labour, but which he knows

from experience, must have cost the author extreme pains to bring to that pitch of perfection. Dryden, Pope, and many others have written in rhyme with all the ease and fluency of prose, not to say, blank verse; and I need not ask you, that know these things so well, who have taken the greatest pains, and who have overcome the greatest difficulties? But should it be granted that rhyme is too heavy a burthen, blank verse, on the other hand, is as much too light an one; our language naturally falls into Iambicks, and any man who can reckon his ten fingers, may put a newspaper into blank verse in as many minutes*.

But

* The above observation is so well proved and illustrated, by an ingenious correspondent of the *Gazetteer* of the 28th of April last, that I cannot forbear inserting the whole letter. That part of it, which is printed in lines of ten or eleven syllables, and is indeed as good blank verse as is to be found in most, if not all, of our late Poems, is no other than a few paragraphs of a former News-paper.

To the PRINTER of the GAZETTEER.

Friday, April 24, 1767.

I was this morning at breakfast with an ingenious friend, and four or five of his guests: There was a late performance (called *Lexiphanes*) on his study table

But were there no other, this reason alone would induce me to give the preference to rhyme. For rhyme, even in our degenerate days, when all true taste seems to be banish-

table lying, together with your paper of this morning.

My friend (who is a warm stickler for blank-verse) was much offended at a passage in *Lexiphanes*, in page 104, and is as follows: "Blank verse is too light a burthen; our language naturally falls into it;—and any man who can reckon his ten fingers, may put a news-paper into blank-verse in as many minutes." My friend warmly said, he would give any man (of the most correct ear) two hours, and desired any of the company to attempt it. Upon this challenge, a gentleman in company desired me to be his amanuensis, and (as soon as I had my necessary implements ready) he took up your paper, and read the articles of news, *instantly*, into *very decent* blank verse. My friend ingenuously recanted his former opinion, in regard to the *very great importance* of that species of poetry; and it was agreed by all present, that I should send you some parts of the manuscript (deducting every thing which in such a dress, might appear offensive or indelicate)

"Tis currently reported and believed,
That Monsieur Rousseau hath at length accepted
A pension.—When the post left Genoa,
Advice arrived (which much alarm'd the Senate)
Viz. That the troops of Corsica had made
A disposition (actually) for storming
St. Bonifacio, both by sea and land.—
Letters from Paris, dated April 9,
Say, that a person (without name) had sent
To the French Academy (November last)

banished, and nothing but grimace and affectation prevail in its room, leads to a simpler and easier expression, and does not require to distinguish it from prose, any
of

A golden medal, worth two hundred livres,
Destin'd for him, who (in their judgment) should
Compose the best discourse upon the use
Of founding free establishments, or schools,
For drawing and mechanicks. The academy
Adjulg'd the prize unto the *Sieur Deschamp*.—
Yesterday came to her moorings in the river,
The Four Friends, *William Merito*, from *Boulogne*.
Last Saturday, at *Canterbury Market*,
Wheat rose in price two shillings in the quarter.—
We hear from *North Wales*, that the several counties
Of *Denbigh*, *Flint*, *Montgomery*, have resolv'd
To abolish that mean custom (long prevailing)
Of keeping servants at their friends expence,
By raising of their wages one third more.
—Arrived here (at *Bath*) the *Duke de Fransac*,
The *Count de Conflans*—*Earl of Exeter*,—
Sir *Alexander*, and my *Lady Powel* :—
Sir *William Draper*,—*General Patterson*,—
The *Colonels Garbut*, *Wyvill*, *Deacon*, *Campbell*.—
The *Captains Cornwall*, *Donnell*, and *Conellan*,—
Mistress Nott, *Mistress Greenlow*, *Mistress Bates*,—
The two *Miss Bartleys*, *Miss Squires*, and *Miss Smith*.
—On *Wednesday* last, alas ! with shame I speak it,
A woman ! young ! and quite genteely dress'd !
Went to a *Bond-street* milliner's :—enquiring
For one, by Name, who lodg'd in the first floor,
But then from home :—They civilly desired
“ She would sit down in the back parlour : ”—There
She waited half an hour, then took her leave,
Having with art conceal'd—(oh, shameful art !)

A small

of Lexiphanes's hard words, or Thomson's ill-jointed, worse-sounding compounds.

J ——— N.

Your sentiments and mine are, in this article, totally consonant and entirely contemporaneous. For in order to maintain the dignification of blank verse, and support its requisite exaltation over prose, our poets have been necessitated to have recurrence, to an inverted collocation of words, retrogradation of accents, an abscision of vowels, a detruncation of syllables, and a diametrical aberration from all the legitimate

A small tea canister—(oh, fie!) of silver,
And several yards of finest Brussels lace:
Which were not miss'd till she had got clear off.

† From such examples let all mortals know,
What dire effects from negligence may flow!
Oh! ne'er may milliners (henceforth) presume
To leave tea canisters about their backward room!
'Tis this that plagues mankind with theft and strife,
And robs the guilty world of many a Culprit's life.

† I beg leave to take notice (by way of commentary) that my poetical friend (warm'd, I suppose, by the distress of that last article, which, I observe, he hath dignified by two or three apostrophe's) was naturally tempted by his subject to rise above lifeless blank verse; and he hath accordingly quite forgot the news-paper, and soared into the *Addisonian* regions of downright rhyme.

modes of speech, without the smallest relaxation of metrical rigour, repugnant and discordant to the genius of our language, and of which there are multifarious exemplifications in the productions of the immortal Milton himself*.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Good heavens! what language is this? Why 'tis worse than I could have imagined.

CRITICK.

I told you so, but you made light of all I said. Can any thing be done in this melancholy case? Had I not met you by accident, I intended calling at your lodgings, to consult you on this business. And in-

* 'Tis worth taking notice of, that most of the hard words in this speech are to be found in No. 86 and 88 of the Rambler, where Lexiphanes treats of Milton's Versification, and professing his desire to be generally understood, studiously declines the dialect of grammarians, and if any where obscure, begs it may be imputed to that *voluntary interdiction*. I should be glad to know what dialect he writes in, or of what art these hard words are the proper terms!

The above speech, however, is said to contain his real sentiments with respect to rhyme and blank verse.

deed

deed had done it before now, but the adventure of the rehearsing poet drove it out of my head. I believe you like hard words as little as I do, nay, am told you have written against them *. But you must be sensible, this inveterate disease, or rather epidemical madness, will not yield to that alone. More powerful remedies must be applied, and I should be glad to know whether Apothecary's Hall furnishes any antidote against it. The ancients purged the brain of madness and choler, by means of white Hellebore: then why should not our modern Esculapiuses possess some specifick to clear the stomach and intestines of the filth and trash of hard words? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

I know not; but I have a draught in my pocket here, I was going to carry to one of my mad patients. 'Tis a member of parliament, who lost his wits together with his

* I remember to have seen a small treatise of that nature ascribed to Dr. Armstrong, how truly I cannot say.

place, at the last change of ministry. He has been very furious indeed, and we have had much ado to prevent his dying the death of an old Roman or modern Englishman; besides, he used to be continually raving about *Dubcity* and *Totality*, which he would have it, occasioned him the loss of his office. This makes me think, there is something not unlike between his case and Mr. J——n's, and that this potion may do our friend some service, for I observe, since the mad member has taken it, he has been altogether silent as to those hard words I spoke of. It works upwards, and with great violence. What do ye say? Shall we try it upon Lexiphanes?

CRITICK.

By all means. 'Twere to be wished we could only recover him so far, as to enable him to translate his own *Ramblers* into tolerable good English; such English, I mean, as a common reader might understand, without the help of a dictionary. For, after all, this may be a bookseller's project at bottom; he might write his *Ramblers*

to make a dictionary necessary, and afterwards compile his dictionary to explain his Ramblers. Such devices are not unusual in the trade, and ought to be discouraged. Come, Mr. J——n, take this draught ; drink it up. 'Twill be of mighty service to you, if you knew all.

J ——— N.

Do not, Doctor, exhibit your medicated mixture to me, but to that hypocrite of learning to bibulate, who has manifestly no skill in the politicks of literature, and who thinks those who are endued with the utmost rectitude of intellectual regimen, in his predicated tortuosity, and inanity of imagination. Like the Samian Sage, he would obtrude upon me a quinquennial silence * ; and unless he be checked by a proper counteraction, would congeal me with the frigid and narcotick infection of habitual drowsiness, voluntary visions, invisible riot of the mind, and secret prodigality of being, into torpor of tongue, suppression of sentiment, and in-

* Almost literally from Lucian.

activity of pen†. He surveys me with the microscope of criticism, but my own laurels obumbrate me from its fulminations‡. His cowardice is lured to the attack, and he mistakes softness, diffidence, and moderation, for imbecility, dejection, and crepitude of intellect. But my firmness and spirit shall overpower his arrogance and repel his brutality. I shall convince him I have more skill in the politicks of literature, than ever Vida had. And since my long and fatiguing service of celebrity, dazzles not the impertinence of his intimacy to a fitter distance, I must confute him with baculinary ratiocination. My cudgel, with reiterated repercussions of communicated assaults, shall soon disseminate, by a rapid eventilation, the brains in his pericranium, blood in his pericardium, marrow in his periosteum, and intestines in his peritoneum.

† Here is a *Quaternion* followed by a *Triad*. Consult the Rambler, No. 89. throughout, a most *delicious morsel* of Lexiphanick eloquence.

‡ Rambler, No. 156.

CRITICK.

CRITICK.

So, he threatens with his cudgel. I thought what 'twould come to. Doctor, shall I venture on him? Will you stand by me? You see what a swingeing fellow 'tis!

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Stand by you! ay, that I will; and, in such a cause, to the very last drop of my blood. Courage, and to him again.

CRITICK.

What, Mr. J——n, you thought to bully us, as you did Mr. Foote! In your cudgel, it seems, consists all your boasted skill in the politicks of literature. But you shall not knock me down, as if I were your bookseller*. Consider, my friend,
we

* The ingenious Mr. Foote, it is said, once intended to exhibit Lexiphanes on the stage, in all the pomp and solemnity of his pedantry. An exhibition, which, in his hands, must have been highly entertaining, and might have been useful. But he was deterred from it, on being told, that Lexiphanes threatened to appear in person, and perform the principal part himself with his Cudgel. The story
of

we are two to one ; so not a word more of your cudgel, Sir, as you tender your ears, or value going to sleep in a sound skin. You may chance to come off with a severe drubbing else.

J ——— N.

Seeing I must succumb under the violence of prejudice, the fury of force, and the superiority of numbers, I shall protect myself with the mask of deceit, the grin of irony, and the sneer of dissimulation*.

My very benevolent convivial associates, I shall not henceforth attempt to darken gaiety, or perplex ratiocination by baculinary argumentation. Practise not therefore the stare of strangeness, pronounce not the monosyllables of coldness, but with the smile of condescension, the solemnity of promise, and the graciousness of

of his knocking down the Bookseller, who is crowned with the Jordan, in Pope's Dunciad, is well known. No doubt that gentleman regretted his *Pericranium* was not defended by that useful implement, when attacked by this Lexiphanick manner of reasoning.

* A brace of *Triads*, which Lexiphanes is supposed to speak aside.

encourage-

encouragement, attend to the sonorous periods of my respectful profession †, and concede me a more extended, a more deliberate, and a more favourable audience.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

By all means. Speak, and spare not, my friend J——n; words are fair, and therefore ought to go free. But fifty-cuffs and cudgel-work is foul play, especially among criticks and gentlemen.—'Tis heavenly sport, i'faith. [*aside to Critick.*]

CRITICK.

I'm glad you like it. But you'd soon change your note, were you to hear as much of it as I have done.

J —— N.

I will not indeed insist on the affirmation, that my Ramblers are devoid of defects; for having condemned myself to compose on a stated day, I might often bring to my task, an attention dissipated with the shrieks and ejulations of children; a memory embarrassed with heterogeneous pursuits,

† Ramb. No. 194.

and incessant interruptions from the importunity of duns, and sedulity of catch-poles; an imagination overwhelmed with the fumes of hefternal computations of convivial Burton ale; a mind distracted with anxieties in agglomerating expedients to obviate the hebdomodal recurrence of the radical postulates of my landlady's pecuniary impudence, and a body languishing with distemperature, consequential on the reiterated repercussions of communicated pleasures. But whatever shall be the final sentence of mankind, I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations. Something I have added to the elegance of its construction, and something to the harmony of its cadence. And as it has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety, I have allotted few papers to the idle sports of imagination. Though some, perhaps, may be found, of which the highest excellence is to raise an undistinguished blaze of merriment,

rimment, easy facetiousness, and flowing hilarity, for scarcely any man is so steadily serious as not to require a relaxation from the sternness of my philosophy, and the disciplinarian moroseness of dictatorial instruction *.

Therefore, Mr. Critick, I value not the insidious fastidiousity of your reproof, and abdominal vociferation. And I obsecrate you, Mr. Doctor, to concede me leave of absence, for I am, at present, instigated by the ramifications of private friendship, to pay a biennial matutinal visitation to my convivial associate, the soul-harrowing Richardson, the most emphatical author of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison, whose consort has for several periodical lunar circumrotations ceased to be fluxionary, by which means she has lost all her powers of fecundity, and to the great infelicity of the desiderating fair one, has become totally unarable and unascensible †.

* Ramb. No. 208.

† Literally from Lucian.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Worse and worse. I find I must give him a larger dose than I thought on; and it may kill him, for I told you it works with great violence.

CRITICK.

Faith give it him all. Though it should kill him, there's no harm done. This fellow, if let alone, will poison the speech of the whole nation.

J——N.

I beseech you, gentlemen, to relax the muscles of your disciplinarian moroseness. I perceive that you are invidious of the high seat which my gigantick and stupendous intelligence that grasps a system by intuition, has obtained on the pinnacles that you are betrayed by passion into a thousand ridiculous and mischievous acts of supplantation and detraction; that you would gladly lure me into drowsy equilibrations of undetermined councils; and congealing my intellectual powers in perpetual inactivity, by the fatal influence of frigo-

frigorifick wisdom, would deprive me of the stamp of literary sanction which my works have received from the dissemination of a rapid sale, and above all, from the annual emanation of royal munificence, the very mention of which must drive competition into the caverns of envy, and make discontent tremble at her own murmurs *.

CRITICK.

What can the solemn fop mean by the annual emanation of royal munificence ?

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

What! don't you know he has a pension † of three hundred a year from the privy purse ?

CRITICK.

* Ramb. No. 193.

† Besides being Lexicographer, Grammarian, Poet, Critick, Play-wright, Essayist, and Novellist, all which Lexiphanes is to a very eminent degree, it seems he is also a sort of prophet. At least, I cannot help thinking, when he wrote his definitions of the word Pension, that he must have been under the influence of a prophetic spirit, if not the second sight, for which, a witty but unfortunate man has ridiculed the Scotch nation, as being a superstition peculiar to them, though 'tis, in truth, a very ancient and universal superstition, many traces of it

CRITICK.

Where is the merit that entitles him to that rare favour and distinction * ? When you say he is not altogether void of sense and meaning, though frequently an odd
fort

it being found in Homer, and some even in Shakespear. In the first place, Lexiphanes defines a pension to be *an allowance given without any equivalent*; and secondly, *the pay of a state-hireling for treason against his country*. Now I can hardly think that either of these definitions ever became entirely just, till Lexiphanes himself became a pensioner. For if his merit in authorship is the equivalent for his allowance, I make bold to say, that merit, if not negative, is at least to use a word of his own, entirely *evanescent*, and of course, no equivalent at all. In the next place, though it cannot be alleged he was ever guilty of treason against the constitution of his country, yet there are, in his writings, numberless treasonable practices against its language, the purity of which, next to the preservation of our constitution, our glory abroad and happiness at home, is, methinks, the most important, and ought to be the most universal concern.

* I have heard it whispered, that the real cause which procured Lexiphanes his pension, was the contempt and aversion he is well known to entertain for the Scotch nation and their innocent country. It seems, the great man at that time was afraid he might *conjoin* his *powers* of *altercation* and *detracti*on, to two very witty and ingenious men, who, through caprice or faction, were then abusing a people very grossly, whom, 'tis said, they were far from disliking in their hearts. But this anecdote, is methinks, extremely improbable; for I can never imagine that
a minister

sort of one, and always more oddly expressed, you have said all you can with justice say in his behalf.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Why, he tells you himself, his works have been *disseminated by a rapid sale*, and *his gigantick and stupendous intelligence has obtained a seat on the pinnacle of art and lofty towers of serene learning*.

CRITICK.

Three hundred a year! Sdeath, 'tis impossible. It must be a lie, by all that's good, and I won't believe it.

a minister, who relying, it may be presumed, on the rectitude of his measures, and conscious uprightness of his heart, so nobly. I will not say politically; neglected such men as Wilkes and Churchill, would ever stoop to purchase the silence *only* of Lexiphanes at so high a price: for I have not heard he hath ever employed his powers of celebration in the cause of his patron, at least I do not remember to have seen his very remarkable cloven foot in the party wranglings of that period. Be this, however, as it will, it implies, at any rate, a very severe satyr against the taste of the public, which, 'twas supposed, could be influenced by any thing said on either side of the question, by that heavy affected pedant, who has not the least notion of eloquence, possesses not the smallest talents for wit, humour, or ridicule, but when he makes an attempt that way, as do him justice, is but seldom, appears as clumsy and awkward as a dancing bear.

SECOND

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

So ! not fatisfied with giving me the lie downright, you fwear to it. Look ye, friend, 'tis nothing to me whether you believe it or no. But I tell you once more, he has a pension of three hundred a year fettled on him for life ; and I am not a perfon that like to have my word called in queftion, when I affirm any thing in fo ferious a manner.

CRITICK.

Dear Sir, I ask you ten thoufand pardons. But let us have no quarrel about that. No, let us rather join in lamenting the melancholy condition tafte and writing are reduced to in our native country.

Fall'n to the ground, they can no lower fall. 'Tis really amazing our great men:—— Yet, perhaps, I wrong them, they might give him this by way of hush-money, to hinder his writing any more.—That can't be true neither ; he writes on, and what is worfe, they imitate him.—Tafte, genius, eloquence, even language are now loft
among

among us without recovery ; we shall soon relapse into that ignorance and barbarity into which the whole world was sunk during the dark ages.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Do not despair ; in a virtuous attempt, every means ought to be tried. Could we only cleanse this Augean stable, whence all that filth and trash has been spread abroad ; could we drain this muddy ditch whence all those torrents of hard words and terms of art have been poured out among the people, it might do some good. Were the fountain-head once dry, the stream would fail of course.

CRITICK.

Ay, as you say, every thing ought to be tried, and no time is to be lost. — Look ye here, Mr. J——n, we are very serious, you must take this draught, indeed you must. It will do you good service, more than you're aware of. Drink, Sir, and quickly too ; if you do not, we will gag you, and pour it down your throat by force.

G

J——N.

J——N.

You persist with a most pertinacious obstinacy, and the fury of your menaces debilitates my force, relaxes me with a numbness, and congeals my resolution with the frigid powers of villatick bashfulness, so that I begin to question the veracity of fame, and almost slumber in the shades of neutrality*. But I am afraid the bibulation of this antidotal mixture will ruinate me, and that if I eject all my resplendency of diction, dazzling scintillations of conceit, regular and unbroken concatenations of allegory, perturbations of images, figurative distortions of phrase, soft lapses of calm mellifluence†, accumulations of preparatory knowledge, sudden irradiations of intelligence, and powers of celebration in the cause of my patron; I am afraid, I say, that the annual emanation of royal munificence would become torpid, frozen and congealed, and no longer continue to flow

* Ramb. No. 159.

† Ramb. No. 152.

with its accustomed accelerated velocity in its present eleemosinary channel.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

He begins to comply ; 'tis only the fear of his pension that makes him hesitate, and faith, between you and me *, there's some reason for it; had he written like a Swift or Addison, no-body would have minded him; we have now got another taste, we love those who elevate and surprize like Bays. I think we had better speak him fair, and flatter him a little.—Do; my dear J——n, take our advice, drink this mixture,

* In the first Edition of this work, I had used the phrase *between you and I*, which tho' it must be confessed to be ungrammatical, is yet almost universally used in familiar conversation, and sometimes by our best comick writers: see Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*. This very trivial slip, if it be one, has not escaped the diligence and sagacity of the learned and candid Reviewers. One of our worthy labourers in that periodical drudgery, has declared, this phrase, and a few others which are only improper in his crazy imagination, to be more offensive to a judicious reader, than all the hard words I had attempted to expose. See Critical Review. His fellow drudge in the Monthly has used me with still less ceremony: "The author of the Rambler, says he, is censured for writing ill by a person who

ture, get rid of that confounded absurdity of hard words, and learn to talk and write like other people. All the world allows you a man of sense and learning; and here's your friend, a mighty admirer of the sound philosophy and deep observation concealed in your *Ramblers*, would give almost any thing to see them translated into good old English.

“cannot write at all.” To prove which, he instances this unlucky, *between you and I, old veteran, I cannot for my heart*. Such are reviewers, and such are their learned labours. They concur in censuring me for my coarse illiberal humour and treatment of the most respectable Dr. Johnson and others. I have observed in my *Sale of Authors*, and I repeat the observation, that our Reviewers, like Sir Roger de Coverley, who would suffer no body to sleep at church but himself, will not suffer an adventurer at the pen to be reprehended, tho’ ever so justly, by any but themselves. Abuse and Billingsgate is their province, the very food they live on. The only piece of humour that can with the least show of reason be called coarse in this work, is the exhibition of the *Emetic* to Lexiphanes, and its consequences. Not to mention that this was necessary, being taken from Lucian, it surely is nothing near so indelicate as the standing and favourite witticism of the Reviewers, the use which they enjoin all pamphlets to be put to, which happen to be written on soft and pliable paper.

J——N.

Constrained by necessity, instigated by the ramifications of your private friendship, and overcome by the importunity of your solicitations, I declare myself obsequious to your councils, and behold I bibulate.—— Good God, what's this? What a fortuitous collision, what an inverted retrogradation, what an enormous combustion, what an erratic grumbling pervades the total involuted series of my intestine canal! I have assuredly swallowed a squeaking devil, or got a ventriloquist in my abdominal regions. Boax, Boax, Boax*.

* Vid. Lucian. The reader may rest assured, that after the second physician becomes concerned in the dialogue, most, if not all, the hard words and Lexiphanicisms, put into Mr. J——n's mouth, are really to be found in the Rambler, though the references are neither so numerous nor so exact as they might have been, owing to a cause already mentioned. Should any doubt my word, they may be convinced with some trouble, and add a thousand more to the stock if they please.

From this time forward, Lexiphanes is a mute person in the dialogue; and I am persuaded every man of taste, and well-wisher to the language of his country, joins me in the hope that he may ever continue so.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Well done, my friend J——N, strain hard, and you'll do the business. Come throw up *powers*, that villainous word *powers*, a word never used by any good writer, but now applied by our modern fribbles to every possible thing, to every thing relating to men or beast, or to things inanimate. We hear of nothing but *powers of ridicule**, *mental powers*, *intellectual powers*,
patron

* This expression, as well as *mental powers*, is to be found in the *Dialogues of the Dead*; though not in those written by the noble author. But then they are in a manner sanctioned by his great authority, as well as by that of the honourable person (Mr. Y—k) who uses them; nor are the three dialogues referred to at all unworthy of the place they have obtained. Notwithstanding which, I make no scruple to censure these two phrases as quaint and Lexiphanick. Besides, the word *powers*, in the sense in which I disapprove it, is used even by my Lord Lyttelton himself. Certain I am, if used at all, it has been used very sparingly in that sense, by any of our old writers. Yet I must own, the greatness of those modern authorities a little staggers me, and makes me suspect I may have contracted an unreasonable disgust at it, from its having been *hacht* about in the manner it has, by our most affected authors, such as J——N and A——de. No man of fashion is now to be seen with a silver watch or buckles; for this reason only, the meanest of the vulgar, who can afford the price, have got them, and they are universally

patron powers of literature, powens of dolorous declamation. Instead of saying, as people did formerly, such a one is a person of talents, parts, or abilities, the word now is, he has great *powers*, and those *powers* are, according to the wares he deals in, either *theatrical, comical, tragical, poetical, or paradoxical.* The modern Roscius cannot step upon the stage, but in the next news-papers, our ears are stunned with the *amazing theatrical powers* of our inimitable

fally deemed a piece of low finery. For the same reason, methinks every polite writer ought to be cautious how he uses a word or phrase, equivocal or doubtful at best, and which has already been so much debased by the common herd of scriblers.

I must likewise take notice in this place, that I do not pretend to reject or *expunge*, out of the English language, any, far less all those words, which, to preserve the humour of the dialogue, I have caused Lexiphanes to throw up. Such a thought would be highly ridiculous; for experience and the practice of the best writers have shewn us that there is no word, not even the hardest in all his Dictionary or Ramblers, but what may be proper, nay the properest at certain times, and in some circumstances. *Proper words in their proper places*, is the definition of a good style given by Swift. Therefore it is not the words themselves, but their affected use, and the affected phrases that I find fault with. But how to attain the one, and to avoid the other, is not to be learned from a grammar or dictionary; but by keeping good company and studying good authors.

Garrick ; nor M——y *exhibit* a new piece, (another of their cant words, seldom proper, but in the mouth of a puppet-man, which, however, they are sure to *exhibit* on every ordinary occasion) whether it be a *Desert Island* or the *Way to win him*, but we have a discussion in the next Review on his *comick* or *tragick powers*, just as it happens to be writ in blank verse or blanker prose. In the next place, get up, *gaze* I beseech you, *imp*, *prime*, *forms*, *honours*, great words with the mad poet ; then *take the lead* a vile phrase, taken from the Card or Billiard table. *Lore*, *Lore*, must come away next, a word of mighty request in Prologues and Epilogues to new plays ; if the author has not been at school, the audience are desired to excuse his faults and pity his ignorance of ancient *Lore* ; but if he has dozed a few years at the university, then they are bullied with his transcendent skill in Greek and Roman *Lore*. In the next place, get up, *gripe*, *growl*, *rouze*, *throbs*, *whine*, words all of them English, but spoiled, Mr. J——n, by your affected use of them. So, so. Well done. *Heave* again,

again, my friend, put your fingers in your throat, I beseech, you, my dear Sir, bring me up all your hard cant words, of two and three, and if you can of four syllables.

J——N.

Boax, Boax, Boax.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Well done, i'faith; here comes *devoid*, *delate*, *replete*, *succumb*, *discuss*, *torpor*, *frigor*, *vernal*, *diurnal*, *paucity*, *inanity*, *vicinity*, *celebrity*, *bilarity*, and a thousand others; so so, his stomach at least seems to be pretty clear now.

CRITICK.

I ask your pardon, Doctor, there are some words yet, I insist on't, are not to be left behind. He must bring up *repugnant* and *abhorrent*.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Good God, what do you mean? What are you doing? Why, man, all these words are in the —— and ——

CRITICK.

What's that to me? If they are there, I know no business they have to be there, at

least on every occasion. They shall come up by heavens, were they even in the thirty-nine articles.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Nay, you'll do as you please. But take notice, I wash my hands on't.

CRITICK.

Here, get me a feather, that I may tickle his throat with its *irritating powers*, and *resuscitate the convulsive motion of his epigastrial regions*. So, here they come at last, but one should think he wrote the — himself he had such an *abhorrency* at parting with *repugnant*, and so great a *repugnancy* to part with *abhorrent*. — But as yet, I have seen none of his *verba sesquipedalia*, none of his words a foot and a half long, those I mean which end in *ation*, *ility*, *ality*, *utity*, *icitude*, *etitude*, and so forth. Besides, he has brought up none of his *Triads* nor *Quaternions*; none of his quaint affected phrases, such as the *silent celerity of time*, the *superficial glitter of vanity*, and a thousand more of the same sort. Should we leave them behind, he will be little the better

better for all the pains we have taken. Pray, Doctor, how do you account for that?

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

The most probable conjecture I can form, is what follows. These words and phrases, by the extreme *ponderosity*, must have sunk so far down into his *abdominal regions*, as to get below the *valve of the Colon*, and must now be entangled in the *involutions* and *rugæ* of his *intestinal canal*, in such a manner, that —

CRITICK.

Ha! ha! ha! What are you turning a Lexiphanes too upon my hands? Come, Doctor, let us have no more of your medical terms and solemnity. They may do very well, and even be proper and necessary in a treatise on anatomy, or at a consultation of grave physicians: but here, between ourselves only, and on such an occasion as this, 'tis no better than downright *Lexiphanicism*, what both of us so heartily despise.

SECOND

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

I ask pardon, I had forgot myself a little. Why, these words and phrases by their great weight have sunk so low down, that they must now lie beyond the reach of a vomit.

CRITICK.

Then we must give him a purge; or if you have ever a glister about you, I shall stand apothecary myself, though he should e'en serve me as Gil Blas did his.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

No, no, we must not dabble any more with him at present. That would infallibly put an end to him. Do you not see, to speak in his own way, that he labours under great *imbecility*, that he is in a state of *debilitating exsudation*, that he is *relaxed with numbness*, and a *frigorifick torpor encroaches on his veins*. There is a *manifest approximation towards the dissolution of his frame of mortality*, and whoever beholds him now, can entertain no *forgetfulness of the fragility of human life*. All these symptoms

With

With *mortal Crisis* do portend,
His days to *appropinque* an end*.

To be serious, we must not let honest Lexiphanes die of the Doctor, if we can help it.

CRITICK.

Rot the fellow, were I sure this villainous infection he has brought in among us would expire with him, I would dispatch him out of hand. But you'll do as you please.

SECOND PHYSICIAN.

Well, I am told there is to be a sale of Authors and Criticks very soon; next week I believe, at Langford's. I shall be glad to see both you and Lexiphanes there. Perhaps you will be put up to sale yourselves. The time of auction will be advertised in the news-papers. If, however, you think our friend's case so desperate, that it will not be safe to wait so long, you may bring him to me to-morrow morning, and I shall then order what may be proper for him. In the mean time, I leave you

* Two lines in Hudibras, who is painted by the inimitable Butler, as a great Lexiphanes.

to instruct him farther, in the best manner you can. For I am a little hurried at present, and am going, by appointment, to a consultation, with some other gentlemen of the faculty, on the case of the Right Honourable — who has got such an obstinate Paraphymosis, that I fear we must make a compleat Jew of him at last.

CRITICK.

Hark ye, Doctor, a word in your ear before you go. Could you not contrive to mix some of your potion slyly in the great man's diet-drink, for on my word, he stands as much in need of it, as Lexiphanes himself. Would to God I had interest to get you appointed Physician in ordinary to the —, and then, if you could prevail on them to take your medicine, it would prove of mighty emolument to the whole nation; we should not surely have so many *tranquillitys* and *pacifications*, and *unanimitys* in the next —. But as for Lexiphanes, you may depend on my doing my best, seeing you have so well paved the way for me. Doctor, your servant.

And

And now, Mr. J——n, the only and the best advice I can give you, however hard it may seem to a person of your years and conceited dignity, is wholly to forget, and even, if I may speak so, *unlearn* all you have hitherto been so fond of. Till this be done, you can never expect the sincere praises of men of sense, or the rational applause of the publick. The eyes of people, of youth especially, whose taste is not yet formed, and who have nothing to guide them in their judgment of books, may be dazzled for a while with the false glitter of your eloquence and the big tumour of your hard words. But how soon they come to be better informed, they will reject you with a loathing equal to that transport with which, it may be, they now admire and imitate you. Should the English be ever studied as a dead language, and your works reach to posterity, if you are not reckoned the first corrupter of our tongue, they will assuredly look upon you in no other light than as an author who wrote in a barbarous age, when all true taste in eloquence was utterly destroyed. Those
who

who make a foreign or a dead language their study, are much better judges of its words and their arrangement, than of its grammatical niceties, or, if you will, purity. That Patavinity objected to Livy, by his contemporaries, we can now discover no traces of; but we hold him one of the chief classics on the score of his excellent words and composition. Agreeable to this, and as I observed before, the main excellence of a style consists in the choice of the words; the next in their order of arrangement; and what ought to be considered in the last place, is the grammatical construction, for none but a Pedant will be offended with a trivial slip of that sort, unless it be attended with obscurity.

How it has happened I know not, but this order is now quite reversed. You especially are faultless with respect to grammar, even so to a degree of pedantry; you have not omitted a single *who*, *that*, *what*, or *which*. The placing of your words, may perhaps have some merit; but then the words themselves are execrable, and when they cannot be altogether condemned,
your

your phrases are, if possible, more abominable still. Nothing is so familiar with you as the *eye of vanity*, the *hand of avarice*, with a thousand more of that sort. You have made a god, at least a person of every vice and virtue, of every passion and affection: a figure of speech never, but sparingly and on very solemn occasions, used by good writers; whereas you bring it in, at every turn, a most eminent proof of the utter corruption and barbarity of your taste.

Would you chuse to forget all this foppery and absurd stuff? Would you wish to acquire some reputation as a scholar and a writer among men of judgment? It is my advice to you, lay down an obstinate resolution to read nothing modern, nothing that has been written since the accession of the present family, unless by those authors who had formed their taste in the foregoing reign. Such were Pope, Swift, Atterbury, Bolingbroke, and a few more, to whom I will venture to add, notwithstanding the high contempt you hold them in, Buckingham and Lansdown. This contempt especially

especially of Buckingham, which most of your brother Pedants * have joined in, I can account for no otherwise, than by the strong antipathy of bad to good, for none have written purer English, and in a po-

* Mr. Warton, author of the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, is the person alluded to in this passage. He seems, indeed, to have contracted a particular antipathy against Sheffield, the last duke of Buckingham who had the misfortune to be an author. He falls foul of him on every occasion, and tells us, *there is no stamp of Genius on his writings*, with other quaint stuff of that sort. It is He likewise, who adopts Mr. J——n's opinion of Walsh, and seems so mightily pleased with his calling that gentleman's writings *Pages of Inanity*, that he puts INANITY in capitals. It must be remembered, that Walsh was accounted by Dryden, a good judge, if ever there was one, the best Critic of his age; and it was he who in a great measure formed Pope, for which he celebrates him as the Muse's Judge and Friend, and for which his memory ought to be revered by every lover of English Poetry. Surely one should have thought that a reputation, which Dryden and Pope, animated both by friendship and gratitude, had exerted all the charms of their poetry to raise, had been fixed on a lasting foundation. But behold the instability of human things! It is overthrown all at once, by the great Lexiphanes, that invincible Drawcansir; and only by one of his hard words!

At the same time, and on the same occasion too, if I mistake not, this Mr. Warton calls his friend Lexiphanes the Excellent Rambler.

Qui Bavium non odit, &c.

liter style, whether verse or prose, than that illustrious nobleman. Not that I would absolutely condemn all authors since that period; some I know have undoubted merit, and, had they not prostituted their admirable talents to write for booksellers, might have been models of perfection *. But as none of them are, I'm afraid, altogether pure, it would be better for a person in your extreme ticklish situation of health wholly to abstain from them.

* I must own that the writer of a late history is alluded to in this passage. And when we consider it, rather as the project of another, than the favourite choice or theme of its author, that he was writing not for reputation only, but also from another motive, and moreover that he was limited in the time of its execution; we cannot but stand amazed at those abilities which in so short a time, eleven months it is said, and under so many disadvantages, could produce a work, of that weight and importance, with so many beauties and so few imperfections, not only an honour to its author, but to the people whose transactions it records. What a reproach is it to the times it was writ in, that so noble a genius should either lie under the necessity, or even find it convenient to write with any other view than reputation alone. It cannot, however, be denied, that there is something too shining now and then, both in his words and diction; but with this essential difference; what is the fruit of art, labour and design in the pedantick old school-boy, proceeds from inadvertence and want of leisure to correct in so lively and spirited a writer as Doctor Smollet.

This

This being laid down as a preliminary, indeed, a necessary step; you ought to betake yourself, without delay, to a careful and attentive perusal of the best old writers. I would have you begin with the poets, taking care, however, to read them under the correction of a judicious master, otherwise you will be apt to make an odd consistent jumble of poetick and prosaick words, as I am sensible you have already done. Were I to compare things so wholly different, I should liken your Ramblers to nothing so much as to the Pleasures of Imagination, and Young's Night Thoughts, both of them equally obscure, affected, and full of hard words. However, when read with due precaution, nothing can instruct a man so well as good poetry, in the true spirit of the English tongue, and the force and energy of its particular words, of all which you have hitherto been entirely ignorant.

After you have continued a proper time in this course, I would advise you to betake yourself, in the next place, to the study of our best writers in prose, our divines,

vines, philosophers and historians, such as Sprat, Tillotson, Clarendon, Temple and Burnet of the Charter-house. Observe well their words and phrases, and all the different circumstances in which they use them. Take notice of the peculiarities of their construction, and do not reject them, though they should seem to be not wholly within the rules of grammar. Though I am sensible that herein I differ from some writers, for whose authority I have the highest veneration, yet I cannot help thinking a living language stands in small need either of a grammar or dictionary. The existence of either is plainly impossible before people have begun both to speak well and write well. While they continue to do so, they are needless; and after a bad taste is once introduced, they will rather do hurt than service, at least, if we are to judge from your writings. The Syntax and choice of words are best to be learned from good authors and polite company.

But if you would see the English language in its full perfection, whether with
respect

respect to purity, elegance, composition, or choice of words; would you see a compleat variety of style, whether on grave or ludicrous subjects, read the works of Dr. Swift; indeed, never lay them aside, let them never be out of your hand, but make them your constant study day and night.

And now being well purged, and in time, I hope, properly instructed, to use the expression of an admirable author, whose works, with equal pride and foppery, you have heretofore called *pages of inanity*; if after so much truly undeserved success you are disposed

To launch forth agen,

Among th' adventrous rovers of the pen, lay aside, I beseech you, that cavilling humour, that supercilious vanity which leads you to pass your affected censures on men of worth, infinitely superior to your own. Thinking, I suppose, that as much as you detract from them, you add to yourself*.

Above

* This disposition is very natural to a Lexiphanes, and almost inseparable from his character. The same

Above all things, sacrifice to the graces and perspicuity, both of which you have hitherto neglected, especially the former. When you sit down to write any thing,
digest

same turn of mind, which leads him to differ so much from the common and ordinary way of expression, whether in speech or writing, leads him to look down upon and despise the rest of mankind from that airy throne which he has reared for himself in his own fantastick imagination. There can scarcely be conceived a more self-conceited sop than the author of the Pleasures: at least, as he has drawn his own picture in that rhapsody. The haughty overbearing temper of that person, who so well deserves the name I have given him, is universally known. A most eminent proof of it is his contemptuous treatment of the late Mr. Churchill, a man, with all his faults, of undoubted genius, and who, as a writer, had much more merit, and hath shewn an infinitely better taste than the pedant who so arrogantly affected to despise him. Had he not been snatched away by an untimely fate, and had he been more diffident and correct, and learned to polish and blot, methinks he was able to give perfections to rhyme it has hitherto been thought unsusceptible of, and which Dryden himself has not attained to; I mean that of running the lines into one another with ease and gracefulness, and giving it all the variety and swelling periods of prose.

Perhaps Mr. Churchill was sufficiently avenged of Mr. J——n, for all the contempt He expressed for him, whether real or pretended, by the single nickname of *Pomposo*; a nickname fitting him so exactly, that I had once thoughts of publishing this Dialogue under that title, as it would be more generally

digest it well in your mind, and lay down a regular plan of it before you begin. Let your style be plain and simple, suited to your subject, and to the capacity of those for whose perusal it is intended. But above all things, avoid the rock you have formerly split on, I mean, hard, long tailed words, and terms of art. Give none of them admittance into your future writings, unless only in such cases, for possibly such may happen, where the avoiding them would appear, from the natural poverty of our language, greater affectation than the use of them,

I shall conclude what I have to say to you on this head, by enforcing my own opinion with the authority of two of the greatest wits that ever were in the world, the one of modern, the other of ancient times; I mean Lucian and Swift. It gives me concern I am obliged to mention to you Dr. Swift's definition of style, which

generally understood, and is more familiar to our ears. However, *Lexiphanes* is by far more pointed and direct, for it literally signifies *Word-sbiner*, or one who always uses, and is mighty fond of, what my Lord Lyttelton would call, a *sbining affected diction*.

is, *proper words in their proper places*, the
 concise, and, at the same time, the full-
 est that ever was given of so complex a
 theme. I leave it to your warmest admir-
 ers, and to yourself, when sober, to de-
 termine in what subject you can find *proper*
places for your hard words, terms of art,
 and absurd phrases. Surely no one will find
 them proper in weekly Essays, on popular
 subjects. I beg leave to recommend to
 your most careful perusal, the great au-
 thor's Letter to a young gentleman on his
 entering into Holy Orders, which, if any
 thing can, will cure you and those numbers
 afflicted with the same distemper of their
 present madness. The next is the admir-
 able Lucian, who gives an advice, which,
 though applied by him to historians only, is
 equally applicable to all other subjects; and
 holds equally just in every language. 'Tis
 a general, an universal rule, against which
 no exception can be imagined, and,
 indeed, ought to be written in letters of
 gold on the most conspicuous place, in
 every library and repository of learning.
 It is this, *use such words only as shall be well*

H

approved

approved of by the learned, and easily understood by the vulgar.

Should you again cherish an ambition to instruct and amuse the publick with periodical Essays, or to translate into good plain English, some of those few Ramblers whose matter may render them worth the trouble; in the first place, make yourself master by repeated readings of the style and manner of the Tatlers, Spectators and Guardians, the only perfect models of such way of writing, perhaps, in the world. But before you venture it to the press, read your Essay to some old woman, were it your landlady or bed-maker, and if she does not understand every word of it, conclude there is certainly something wrong, and never cease altering it till she does*.

Should

* Dr. Swift strongly recommends this method in the letter quoted above, and enforces it by the example of the famous and virtuous Lord Falkland, in the time of Charles the first, whose constant practice, he tells us, it was, “ whenever he doubted whether a word were perfectly intelligible or no, to consult one of his Lady’s Chambermaids, (not the Waiting-woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in romances) and by her judgment was guided, whether to receive or to reject it. And

if

Should you undertake a work of greater importance or of longer breath, after 'tis compleated, let it lie by you for some time at least, till the self-applause naturally attending

if that great person" continues the Dean, "thought such a caution necessary in treatises offered to the Learned World, it will be sure as proper in sermons where the meanest hearer is supposed to be concerned, and where, very often, a Lady's Chambermaid may be allowed to equal half the congregation, both as to quality and understanding." The opinion of this great master, with respect to sermons, it is evident may be applied with equal force and justice to weekly Essays, intended for the amusement of tea-tables, and instruction of the youth of both sexes. It is with sincere pleasure I own that the *World* and *Connoisseur* seem to be altogether faultless in this point. But Mr. Hawkesworth, a very ingenious man, appears to have spoiled his *Adventurers* almost entirely, by a fond and foolish imitation of this Pedant, whom he equals in every thing where the other most excels, and is far his superior in fancy and invention. His words indeed are not so execrable, but his phraseology is very little better, and he deals almost as deep in *Triads* and *Quaternions*. I had not the *Adventurers* by me, when composing the *Rhapsody*, neither did it occur to me, otherwise it must have appeared at the bottom of the page, for I find it would have furnished me with many *delicious morsels of Lexiphanick eloquence*.

The inimitable Moliere too, an authority the greatest that can be alledged, constantly followed, as we learn from Boileau, the practice of Lord Falkland, recommended by Swift. It is a well known story of him that he never ventured any of his pieces

tending the heat of composition be wholly abated. Then take it up, read it over in a cool moment, refining, correcting, and polishing to the utmost of your power. But do not trust to your own judgment alone. Consult some friend, whose candour and honesty you can rely on. But let it be one who laughs at your present manner of writing, as heartily as I do. You cannot

on the stage, till he had first consulted his old House-keeper, to whom he used to read his comedy, as she was sitting at the fire-side in the evening, at work, with her spectacles on : and he always used to judge of the reception his play would meet with from the audience, by the impression it had made on the old woman, and he seldom, if ever, found himself mistaken. It would be well if our modern play-wrights, those belonging to the Inns of Court in particular, would take the opinion of their bed-makers and laundresses, before they carried their pieces to the managers or actors, for of the two I take the former to be infinitely the better judges : and I should entertain much more sanguine hopes from a dramatick performance, at which a laundress, on hearing it read, had either laught or wept, provided however she had not laught at the fustian of a tragedy, or cried at the dullness of a comedy, than from another over which she had fallen asleep ; though the latter were to be set off with all our *inimitable Garrick's managerial arts, theatrical powers and judicious cast of parts*, cant phrases in vogue at present : nay, even though it were to be ushered in by a most excellent prologue, and dismissed with a still more excellent epilogue, both written by that gentleman.

depend

depend on the opinion of your former admirers, or of the great men who gave you the pension. Those who could praise or reward you for what you have hitherto done, are, assure yourself, very incapable judges.

And now when you have set the last hand to your work, publish it boldly. If you should not chuse to run any risque yourself, or be at the trouble to solicit a subscription, put it up to auction among those who deal in buying and selling books, and dispose of it to the highest bidder, not in the least regarding any character one of those tradesmen may have over another, for his own superior judgment, or the goodness of his wares. A work of real and transcendent merit will make its way into the world, though exposed to sale on the meanest stall in Moorfields.

But the last, though not the least important advice I shall give you, is this. Have no manner of dealing or concern with book-sellers, except what I have just now hinted at. Never consult them, or take their directions about any subject you are to write

on ; never contract or enter into any engagement with them about any work whatsoever ; if you are unhappily under any such contract at present, get rid of it as quick as you can ; for it is impossible that a man who writes for booksellers, should write well. They do not expect, or even desire he should. They are like those builders who build on short leases, and want their edifices to last only for a certain term. In my conscience, I believe they are the great patrons of long *vermicular* words ; for this reason only, that they blot more paper, and increase the price of their wares. In short, never shew the booksellers a manuscript, till you think it fit for the press, and then talk with them about nothing else, except the price they will give you for it.

Besides, having now got a handsome pension, you lie no longer under any need of writing for money. But improbable as it may be, should you even be deprived of this provision for life, do any thing ; die, starve, perish, sooner than prostitute your pen for hire, a dirty instrument in still dirtier

dirtier hands, to spoil the language and corrupt the taste of a people, so rich and famous, so renown'd and flourishing, the masters of the ocean and arbiters of the world.

Thus, Mr. J——n, have I given you my best advice. If you follow it, your Rambler may possibly be forgotten, at least, so far as never to rise up in judgment against you, and you may in time acquire a reputation which may chance to be lasting. If you do not, but return like the dog to your vomit, and like the swine, to wallow in the mire and filth of your hard words and absurd phrases, I can only say, that I have acted the part of a friend towards you, and that you will have nobody to blame but yourself. But whatever course you follow, be assured that it is impossible you should write worse than you have hitherto done.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE foregoing advice, tho' address'd to Lexiphanes only, and in a manner applied to one in his particular situation, is intended for all who may write for the future, and may, without any vanity I speak it, if strictly followed, be eminently useful to them all. It is, indeed, little more, the change of circumstances allowed for, than a literal transcript from Lucian. And there is nothing in it, but what may be fairly deduced from him, unless it be those passages concerning Booksellers, who are certainly a very different sort of gentry at present, from what they were in his time: owing to one of those changes which the art of printing has introduced into the state of Letters, and which, this in particular, is by no means advantageous to them. Lucian, were he now alive, would have been, I am convinced, of the same opinion, and would have concurred in the same advice.

In

In short, I have scarce deviated in any one article from Lucian's plan, or made any additions to it, except in the Episode of the *first Physician* or the *mad rehearsing Poet*, as I call him. I thought something of this sort absolutely necessary for completing my design, and I wanted to give my opinion, in the present dispute, about blank verse and rhyme. A very great Philosopher and Historian (Mr. Hume) expressly says, that in all nations and languages, Poetry has attained to its perfection before Prose; and as far as I am able to judge, he is justified in these sentiments by experience itself. For the same reason whatever that may be, when we perceive the Poetry of a nation to decline, we may assuredly expect to see, very soon, a like degeneracy in their Prose. Blank Verse differing so little by its measure from Prose, naturally leads to a swollen turgid expression, and a set of Hypercriticks among us, ignorant of the general turn and bent of our language, and vainly setting up Milton and Shakespear, as models of imitation, who certainly spoke a different-dialect from

what we do now-a-days, and in all their truly valuable passages, are entirely *unique* and inimitable, have recommended this Blank Verse, not only as the best measure for Tragedy, where the example and success of our most approved Dramatick writers, tho' I cannot altogether condemn the rhyming plays of Dryden and Lee, have rendered it preferable, but also for the sublimest and most ornamented epick, didactick and descriptive Poetry, for which it is altogether unfit, unless when under the management of a Milton or Shakespear. Thus has it become fashionable, and hence the swollen, turgid expression already mentioned, and so natural and peculiar to it, and of consequence, the vile affected Lexiphanick style in Prose of Mr. J——n, and his followers and imitators. The conduct of the Dialogue shews that the circumstance of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, being the production of a Physician, is the reason why that is pitched upon as the object of criticism in particular, whilst other performances of the same nature, might have been met with equally repre-

reprehensible. But though not one tittle of the censure past upon it, ought to be abated; yet, I think, a great deal may be said in excuse of the author, which at the time I did not attend to. 'Tis certain, from the time of its first appearance, it must have been a juvenile performance, and the manner of it, as well as Philosophy inculcated in it, I believe were all the vogue at the place where it was first written, both of which are very dazzling in the eyes of a young gentleman of a luxuriant imagination, before he has corrected his taste from soberer and more approved models. Besides from the *Rhapsody*, as far as is intelligible to me, he seems to be a man of virtue and benevolence, a friend to the natural rights and liberties of mankind, and a person of an enlarged and liberal turn of thought, qualities infinitely more estimable than the happiest poetical talents in the world without them. Perhaps, the strange and unaccountable success it has met with, may be one reason why his name still appears before it,

though

though now of great eminence in a learned and useful profession.

Having here an opportunity, I shall just barely recapitulate what, after so long an interval of time, I can recollect of the chief heads of my intended Preface, I mean the causes of a present decline of taste and good writing among us. The first is that universal law of nature, to which all human things appear to be subjected; namely, a slow rise and progression from a weak and infirm state, to that degree of maturity and perfection their nature is capable of, and thence a gradual decline and total dissolution at last. The illustrious author, just now quoted, has handled this curious subject in his Essays, with all that accuracy and precision peculiar to himself; and to him I refer the reader. My Lord Lyttelton has, I think, barely alluded to this cause, but Doctor Swift has expressly taken it for granted. For he tells us, in his letter to the Lord Treasurer Oxford, that “the *English* tongue was not arrived
“to such a degree of perfection as to make
“us apprehend any thoughts of its decay.”

But

But I am afraid, that he was herein greatly mistaken. Setting aside Shakespear and Milton, Poets *sui generis*, of a strain peculiar to themselves, it seemed even then past a question, that the poetical style had been carried to its utmost perfection by Butler, in the burlesque way, and by Dryden and Pope in the grave and serious, of all whom we may truly say, with Horace,

Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.

And that Swift himself, and his contemporaries, had likewise brought our Prose to the highest pitch of excellence it ever will attain to, this is a manifest proof; he lived to see it's decline, he lived to see, not to mention numberless other proofs, Gordon's ridiculous and affected translation of Tacitus, encouraged and subscribed to by all our prime nobility and great men.

The next cause which may not only have hastened the decay, but also prevented the due growth and full maturity of taste and Letters among us, has been the peculiar temper

temper and situation of our princes ; for nothing is more true than this proverb :

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.

Of all our monarchs that have reigned since our tongue has become in any sort polished and refined, none appear to have had the smallest pretensions to taste, except the two Charles's. The unhappy exit of the first, and the violent troubles and convulsions in which he was involved, during the greatest part of his reign, account too sufficiently why letters did not flourish more under him, and why he did not more encourage them. The second was every way more fortunate ; bating his love of ribaldry and licentiousness, then so prevalent in the nation, and attended with such bad consequences, he undoubtedly possessed a sound judgment and discernment both in style and literary productions. Even his short and *extempore* speeches to his parliament, have a strength and elegance, and dignity unknown to compositions of that kind now a days. But then he was entirely void of true generosity and
liberality,

liberality, and seems only to have had a silly sort of good-nature which could not resist the importunity of the many craving mistresses and hungry courtiers about him. Though no prince in his political capacity, not even Augustus himself, was ever more obliged to Virgil and Horace, than Charles was to Butler and Dryden, yet he had the base ingratitude to suffer them, though both men of virtue and blameless characters in private life, the one to languish in poverty and obscurity, and the other to do what is as bad, to write for his bread.

I have sometimes amused myself with imagining what a fortunate circumstance it would have proved for Letters, had our present sovereign appeared on the British stage, just a century before he did. The declared liberality and protection of the monarch, would have inspired that manly wit and genius so peculiar to those times, and made them soar to heights that now perhaps we have no conceptions of, whilst his virtuous example and avowed regard for modesty and decency, would have
tempered

tempered their licentiousness, the only, at least, essential failing they had.

But, however, though Charles afforded no other encouragement to men of wit and genius, than his countenance, the notice he took of them, or the private approbation he bestowed on them, yet even that was attended with good effects, and produced very happy consequences. For if it did not create, at least, it encreased an ambition in the nobles and great men, not only to patronize and encourage Letters more effectually than the sovereign did, but also to honour and adorn them by their practice and example. Nor did this *impulse*, if I may so call it, received from him, finally determine with him. It continued with the utmost force and energy till the end of the queen's life. And, in fact, that whole constellation of wits which so nobly distinguished and adorned the female reign, were all, without exception, formed after the example, and even by the precepts of those that had figured in Charles's days. Such was Swift by Sir William Temple,
Pope

Pope by Walsh and Wycherley, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, Steele, Addison, Congreve, Prior, &c.

But now a race of foreign princes succeeded to the throne, who having no models of polite literature in their own native tongue, could not be supposed to encourage what they had no conception of, in another which they did not understand. But this was of little consequence in itself; for letters having never enjoyed more than the countenance of the sovereign, had been long before deprived even of that, ever since the revolution; for William, though a great man, and a friend to liberty, besides understanding our language but imperfectly, was as great a *Vandal* in taste as the rest of his countrymen. But the fatal blow, was given by the violence of the Whig faction, which became then predominant; and forgetful of the lenity wherewith themselves had been treated, and not contented with shutting up every avenue to preferment, whether in church or state, against their adversaries, attainted, proscribed, banished, and destroyed them all as
far

far as lay in their power; and amongst them happened to be, not only far the greatest share of the wit, genius, and learning then in the nation, but also the most munificent patrons, encouragers and rewarders of them. And this blow was farther confirmed, and I may say altogether rivetted by the long and absolute government of a sole minister, which soon after succeeded. A minister, who knew no method of government but corruption, no art of persuasion but proffering the dirty bribe, and could lay hold on no one passion or affection of the human breast, but avarice alone, the most sordid of them all. It was no wonder that this man's administration, equally contemptible and inglorious, both at home and abroad, should rouse up against him all the wit and genius, which he and his faction had left in the nation. And it was an unavoidable consequence, that He, who had no taste himself, as plainly appeared from the choice of his literary champions and defenders, so profusely paid out of the publick Treasury, should be an irreconcilable enemy, and do all in his power

power to destroy That, which he knew was his mortal foe, and which actually wrought his down-fall as a minister at last.

Besides, the long and inglorious continuance of this man in power, was attended by another very pernicious effect. So violent were the disputes and contentions raised about him, and on his account, that the whole attention of the publick was diverted from every other object, and turned into one channel, into that of politicks and party wrangling and altercation, producing only temporary pieces, which as soon as their turn was served, were thrown aside like so many almanacks or news-papers, and contained only materials for inflaming the passions, without any of that rational amusement and instruction which every man who takes a book, with an intention to peruse it, has a right to expect from it.

At last, those party heats and animosities having in a great measure subsided, more from weariness and the want of proper objects to wreak themselves on, than from satiety or any other better cause; and all the great men who had flourished
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in the queen's reign, being either dead, attainted, retired or forgotten ; and during the ignominious interval that followed, no capital work having been executed which might serve as a model of imitation, or great original and natural genius arisen, whose authority might fix the attention and direct the judgment of the publick ; it is not to be wondered at, if in these circumstances something happened to us, similar to that which befel the Romans, when their licentious republic had degenerated into a most despotick tyranny, and all their party disputes and distinctions had been annihilated under the denomination of their emperors : I mean, that a parcel of *Shiners*, and *Lexiphaneses*, and *Paradox-mongers*, should arise, and seizing an almost empty stage, by their vapouring and huffing, and that petulance and impudence, so very natural to them, and by *exhibiting* something to the public, that appeared *novel* and *brilliant*, in short, something that had not been seen before, should acquire a reputation, which, however ill grounded at first,

first, may now be very difficult to destroy. Hence the fame of an A——de, of a J——n, and many others, whom I shall not, at present, mention. And hence the modern reputation of a Young, who forgetting his better and chaster manner by which he had distinguished himself, even when Steele and Addison, Swift and Pope, were in the vigour of their faculties, became in his dotage, a perfect Lexiphanes, and succeeded so well in that way, that he is no longer known by his *Universal Passion*, but by his *Night Thoughts*, at least his works are generally advertised under that title.

I have insisted the longer on this second cause of the declension of letters among us, as it seems peculiar to ourselves. I proceed now to the third and last cause, which is however become universal. And that is the change which the art of printing has introduced into the state of letters, and which, as managed at present, not only prevents their improvement, but also their continuance in purity and simplicity, and even hastens and brings on their degeneracy.

racy. It has, indeed, been of the most eminent usefulness, by multiplying and dispersing all the ancients which had escaped the ravages of time and barbarous nations, as well as all those moderns who truly deserve the name of Classics in any language, in such a manner, that their loss seems now to be impossible, and that they can only be destroyed by the last pangs and dying convulsions of nature. But the change which it has brought about in the trade of Bookselling, and also its having made Authorship itself a sort of trade, have been attended, especially in this free and commerical country, with inconveniences, balancing in a great measure, those mighty advantages. Certainly, before the invention of printing, Bookselling was a very honourable and useful profession; and at that time, and long afterwards, it became still more so. Booksellers and Printers, who seem then to have been one and the same persons, were in fact, the great restorers of learning, and the most learned men in the world themselves; for the best editions we have now
of

of the Classicks, and many other works, were published not only at their expence, but under their care and revisal. But tho' this profession may be somewhat degenerated from what it originally was, and few who are now engaged in it may be such learned men and such capable judges of literary productions, as many were at the first invention of printing; yet Booksellers are still equally useful, indeed as honourable as any other merchants whatever, especially those who follow that occupation only, and remain contented within their former limits, or even where they proceed one step farther, and purchase at a price agreed on the right of a copy from any gentleman who shall offer it for sale to them. But when once they commence, not authors, but book-makers and manufacturers, literary projectors and undertakers, and for that purpose hire labourers and journeymen to work under them, who are, indeed, very improperly stiled authors, it is then that they become highly pernicious, and even entirely destructive of all good taste and learning.

In

In the first place, the yearly, monthly, weekly, nay, daily lumber and trash which they are continually dispersing, in immense loads among the people, under the titles of Journals, Magazines, Museums, Miscellanies, Records, &c. every one of which, according to them, contains more in quantity than another, and are all composed by authors of the first eminence; together with those innumerable histories and compilations of all sorts, retailed every Saturday night at sixpenny portions, and that infinite variety of Dictionaries and Encyclopedias of Arts and Sciences, by which they fritter learning to tatters, and afford but an empty superficial smattering at best; I say, all these productions, which are projected and supported, and even it may be said, created by Booksellers, are attended with very bad consequence: that most readers, seduced by curiosity, the perpetual puffing of News-papers, and a silly notion that the last writers on any subject must be the best, their minds being clogged and vitiated with this garbage, not only lose all relish of the old approved writers,

writers, in which alone are to be found the true and solid principles of learning and science, but also loath and reject them, just as a green-sickness girl, when gorged with chalk and trash, nauseates the nicest dainties set before her at a regular meal. And in the same proportion, that the older writers are neglected, modern original composition is discouraged. For in the days of our ancestors, every young writer who ventured a new performance abroad into the world, which seemed to promise any thing, was always sure of, at least, a fair and impartial hearing from the public; and if he merited the attention he claimed, he met with his reward; if not, the worst punishment he had to dread, was being neglected and forgotten. But We, their Sons, are grown much wiser, as well as infinitely more cautious: the greatest number now-a-days, will not so much as cast their eyes on a new production, unless, it may be, a Romance or a Novel manufactured for a circulating library, till they have consulted their monthly Oracles, a Magazine, a Museum, or a Review, and

have seen what judgment is past upon it by that labourer whose task it happens to be, or who has that particular branch of the manufactory, under which it falls; allotted to him by his master and employer, the book-maker. Further, from the characters of those who make up this periodical stuff; for what man of any abilities, whether natural or acquired, will ever stoop so low, unless compelled by meer necessity, when the consciousness of that, and of the unworthy manner wherein he prostitutes his talents, will probably render him a worse performer than the heaviest drudge? and likewise from the manner in which it is made up, always against a stated day, which renders impossible the observation of Horace's rule, not even *in nonam diem*, seldom *in nonam horam*, no alteration, no erasement, no rejecting, no waiting for the lucky moment, but away it must come, generally as wet from the brain as from the press; from all which circumstances, I affirm, it is impossible that these periodical publications can be other than crude insipid trash, or else,

what

what is worse, vile affected Lexiphanick
fustian, which diffuse and establish a bad taste
wherever their circulation extends, and
that may be called universal.

In the next place, by those arts and
practices so long continued and so often
repeated, the very name of *author* is be-
come a term of ridicule and contempt. I
doubt not but this very circumstance alone
may have deterred many persons of rank
and fortune from appearing in that charac-
ter ; together, perhaps, with their appre-
hensions of the petulant ill-manner'd cen-
sures of our monthly Criticks. And here I
cannot pass by these gentlemen, without
spending a word or two on their practices.
They would fain pass upon us as literary
Doctors and Physicians, as discoverers of
all defects and imperfections in works of
learning, genius and wit. I shall neither
dispute their pretensions, nor question
their skill in their calling. But methinks
it is sufficient mortification, and even pu-
nishment for a poor man, who fondly con-
ceits the composition he has just put to the
press will be universally read and admired,

and excite the attention of all the wise and learned, to find it, when it comes abroad, lie uncalled for, and altogether neglected in his bookseller's warehouse. The natural death of all dull and unsuccessful authors, is to doze away, insensibly, in a lethargy. And this used to be their fate till that happy period, when booksellers became book-makers, projectors, and manufacturers of literary Journals and Reviews. But what should we say of a Physician, who, after having past sentence of death on a patient, and seeing him fall into a lethargy, a mortal symptom, and the natural consequence of his malady, should be at great pains to awake him out of it, only to stretch him on the rack, and make him expire in torture and agony ; and then brag, as an instance of his profound skill in prognosticks, that no-body whom he had thus tortured ever survived it? Possibly we might not be able to controvert that skill, but we should assuredly think him barbarously and wantonly cruel. Just so is the general practice of our modern Criticks. But to return ; that backwardness

wardness which men of independent circumstances discover to appear as writers, is of worse consequence to Letters than may be imagined. For whatever our Lexiphaneses and professed authors may say to the contrary, I cannot help being of opinion, that the acknowledged superiority of the ancients over us moderns, is less owing to the superiority of the languages they wrote in, than to that of their external circumstances; for they were, almost without exception, all of them men of distinguished quality, fortune and consideration in the state, intimately conversant, and deeply engaged in the most important public concerns.

But I am insensibly got into a subject, and among a set of company, Booksellers, or rather Book-makers and their Labourers, very improper for the grave and serious air which this dissertation has hitherto assumed; therefore I shall willingly take my leave of them at present; for besides pursuing the plan of this Dialogue somewhat farther, I have already handled them, in a fitter and perhaps a more agreeable

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manner,

manner, in another dialogue, entitled, *The Sale of Authors*, the hint of which, I need not inform the learned reader, is taken from Lucian's *Auction of the Lives of the Philosophers*, and which I may publish also, should this attempt meet with a favourable reception from the public*.

And now having had occasion to mention the name of this illustrious ancient once more, I cannot but observe on the peculiar felicity that attended the Greek, the language he wrote in, which continued from his days upwards to those of Homer, and we know not how long before, a period of at least a thousand years, in a state of the utmost purity. And I cannot, for my heart conceive there is any extravagance in hoping that our own Tongue may be equally happy for as long a time, at least, as our island shall remain, or our government subsist in its present form. In short, none of those causes which operated so powerfully on the corruption of the Roman Tongue, and at last wrought the destruction both of that and the Greek, seem at all to threaten us. We have now

* See *Sale of Authors*, lately published.

a Prince on the throne, who is a Briton born, and who glories in the name, and we have the fairest prospect of an uninterrupted succession of such Princes. Our government seems to be fixed on so secure a basis, and so equally balanced, that we have no reason to fear its degenerating either into Tyranny or Anarchy; and our situation as an island, together with our almost invincible power at sea, most effectually secures us from conquests or invasions, or even hurtful intermixtures with foreign and barbarous nations. So that it should seem we have nothing to apprehend for our language, but for our own levity and wantonness, our ridiculous fondness for vain and fantastick ornaments, and a false brilliancy of style. It was this which had crept into the Greek in Lucian's time; which began the corruption of the Roman Tongue, and which now threatens to corrupt our own. But seeing that in glory and renown, and almost in extent of dominion, we rival the Greeks and the Romans, and excel them far in the wisdom of our laws, and in the constitution of our govern-

government, methinks it should be the constant ambition, and it would be a laudable one, of our princes and great men, and all those whose superior talents and situation in life enable them to guide and direct the taste of the publick, to manage it so that we might continue to rival them also in Letters and in Arts, which we can never expect to do, but by preserving our language pure and uncorrupted.

I should now take my leave of Doctor J——n, a title which it seems has been lately conferred upon him in the Newspapers, and is, indeed, a very good name, either to travel with or advertise by. But some of my friends have insisted upon it in a very peremptory manner, that after so much gravity and solemnity as is displayed in this Postscript, and in the advice or rather Sermon addressed to all authors in the person of Lexiphanes, I should adopt the practice of a certain judicious Critick and Manager, whose invariable rule it has been, after having exerted all his *powers* in the *exhibition* of any of those *deep distressful dramatic pieces* which he has so charitably

ably midwifed into the world, to dismiss his audience in good humour at last, and to banish all the thoughts of hanging, drowning, or shooting, which so many in this country are apt to entertain without any provocation at all, by a most witty and facetious Epilogue of his own composing. They have likewise enforced this advice, by an authority, the greatest to me in the world, I mean by the example of my own hero, Dr. J—— n himself, who frequently qualifies the *sternness of his Philosophy*, and the *disciplinarian moroseness of his dictatorial instruction* with the *irresistible charm of easy facetiousness and flowing hilarity*.

In short, they have made it a point with me, that after so much formal gravity, I should *exhibit all my powers to kindle up such an unextinguishable blaze of merriment, and raise such an uninterrupted stream of jocularity, as to convulse a large company of readers with universal laughter, and make them disturb whole neighbourhoods with the vociferations of their applause*.

But

But alas! I possess no such *powers* of *merriment* and *bilarity*; nay, I am really afraid, that the following Letter, which fell accidentally into my hands, and which I have inserted at their request, tho' against my own judgment, will produce effects quite contrary, to what they are pleased to expect from it. At least I can safely say, it had such upon myself: for, as there is no reason to call in question the genuineness and authenticity of it, nothing, I think, can raise the indignation of any man who has the least spark of good-nature and humanity in his bosom, so much as to find that a worthy and ingenious foreigner, who has lately come to reside among us, and who has done us the honour to study our language, in the same manner as the most learned men in all ages have studied the Greek and Latin, should have been so barbarously and inhospitably treated by us; and that for no other reason, but because he has unluckily mistaken Doctor J——n's real aim and intention in compiling his Dictionary, and has thought he was learning from thence the real and simple meaning

ing of our most common Words and Terms, whilst the Doctor was only displaying his own great wit and ingenuity, his disinterested patriotism, and sincere love for his country.

I shall make no farther remarks, though there is an ample field for them; but leave the unfortunate gentleman to state his own case, and to speak for himself.

The letter above-mentioned was directed to a Gentleman of great eminence in the Law, whose name I am not at liberty to reveal. It is as follows, *verbatim et literatim*.

MONSIEUR,

ME be one Franchéman dat représenté my grievance to you vor de advise. My occupation be to dressé and to frizé de Hairs of de Ladies and de Jentilmans; and out of de pure affection vor de bon peuple of Englandé, and vor deir grand improvement, and dat dey make de better appearance, me leave my chere patrie, and come over heré. And me ave at de grand depense made one purchase of de Dictionaire of

of de Docteur S—l J——n, vor apprendre more facilement, and parlé more justement and proprement de English Tongué. But dat vilain Dictionaire ave ledé me into ver grand mistaké, and ave gotté me kické, cuffé, beaté, and my teet drivé down my troaté; and now me vant to know veder me can ave de action of de law vor my damage against dis Docteur J——n.

Ave de patience, Monsieur, and me vill tellé you all my misfortune. Ven me arrivé a Dover, me ave dans ma poche one piece of de fine Brussel Lacé, as a presant vor Ruffle, or oder tings, for my ver good friend Madame la Duchesse of — But no sooner me set footé on shoré, but de grand vilain come, and he do searché me and he take from me my Lacé. I aske him, Foutre, vat Diable be you, and vor vat you robé me? He tellé me, he be one Officer of de Excise, and he do no more dan his duty. Den I say, Foutre, dis be de hateful Taxé levied upon de Communité, and you be de Vretché hiré by dose to vom Excise be payé. Den he enter in a grand colere, and he striké me, and
breaké

breaké my headé, Jarnie. I tella him, All dat be in de Dictionaire of de Docteur J——n* ; but he damn Me, and de Docteur J——n bot.

Ver well, dus I losé my Lacé, and ave my headé broké ; and now I go vor Londres in de Diligence, and de ver next day go to Monsieur SAY, and desiré Him to put in de Gazetteer, as one Article of Nouvelles ; Dat last nighté arrive from Parie, Monsieur Dugard de Belletère, to dressé and to frizé de Hairs of all his ver good friends de Noblesse of Englandé, dat he ave his habitation at de Gridiron, in Broad St. Giles's, and dat he vill vait on de Ladies and Jentlemans at deir own housé. But Monsieur SAY tella me, ver civilement, dat he must ave de Money from me, vor dat de Gouvernment chargé to himé, and make him payé. Den I tella him, I see it be ver true vat

* EXCISE, A hateful tax levied upon Commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid. JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY.

Docteur J——n say of you †, Dat you be one Bougre of the utmost Infamie, and dat you be one Vretcé hiré to justifie de Cour. Monsieur SAY demandé of me, vor vat I affronté him in his own housé. Den I draw my sordé vor my propre defence, but Monsieur SAY také my sordé from me Begar, and break it over my headé, and den he and his Diable kické me down stairé Jarnie.

After dis, to refreshé and recruité my spirit, I go to one Beer-house, and do callé vor one coup of Liqueur, and do enter into conversation vit one Jentleman dat was fuming his pipé at de fireside, and dis Jentleman ave but one eye, one legé, and one armé. And de grand contestation and de ver high vordé arise about de gloire of de grand Monarche, and of de Franché nation, and de Jentleman demandé of me, Vat I be? I tella him, I be one Marquis of France, and one Chevalier of de order of St. Louis; and den demandé of himé

* GAZETTEER. It was lately a term of the utmost infamy, being usually applied to wretches that were hired to vindicate the Court.

Ibid.

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Vat be you? and he tella me, dat he be one Lieutenant of one man of Var, dat he lose one eye at Cape Breton, one armé in the combat vit *Monsieur Conflans*, and one legé at Martinique, and dat he live at present on his half-pay, and dat he ave, beside, one small pension of Tirty Livre sterlin a year. Den I say to him; Jan Foutre, I be my own Matré, but you be one slave hiré to obey your Maitré; Doctor J——n tella me so*, and dat you be one Traître to your country Begar. De Jentleman say noting, but vit his stumpé knocké me down, and drivé tree of my teet down my troaté.

Ver well, all dis ver well. I lie one mont in my bedé, and ven I be recoveré, I see one morning one avertissement vor de Consumers of Oats, to meet together at de Sun-Tavern, Cheapside, to consulté on deir special affairé. I consult de grand Dictionaire of dis Docteur J——n, and I see

* PENSION. An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.—PENSIONER. A slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his Master. Ibid.

dat Oats be de food of de horsé in Eng-
landé, but of the people in Scotlandé*.
Le Diable, say I to myself, do de English
horsé and de Scottishmans meet and drinké
togeder in dis country ! Begar I will go
fee dis Mervielle. Vell, I go to de Caberet
at de hour, and see ver few Scottishmans,
and ver many Englishmans, but not one
Horsé nor one Maré. I vait a long time,
and at last I say to some, dat I thought were
Englishmans, by deir broad facé and deir
great belly : Vat Jentlemens be all your
Horsé sické or take physické, dat you come
here in deir place, and be de representative
of de Horsé ? But dey tinké I do affronté
dem, and dey d—n my eyes, and kické
me, and cuffé me, and bruisé me so, dat
I be took up for deadé, and do keep my
bedé ever sincé.

But, Monsieur my Apoticaire tella me,
dat dis Docteur J——n, be himself, ten
timé one greater flavé to his Matré, and
ten timé one greater Traitré to his country
dan de Lieutenant of de ship of Var vit

* OATS. A grain which in England, is generally gi-
ven to horses, but in Scotland supports the people. lb.

one eye, one armé, and one legé; vor dat he ave got one pension of Tree Hundred Livre sterling a year, vor de writing of de nonsense and de grand stuffé; vereas de poor Lieutenant dat losé one half of himselfé, in de service of his country, ave got but Tirty. Derefore, Monsieur, mon Cher Ami, I beseecha you to filé one billé in Chancery against dis said Docteur S——l J——n, vor dat He, vit his vilain Dictionaire, vilfully and vit malice propense, ave cheaté, deceivé, and abusé me so, dat I ave got my headé and sordé broké, my teet knocké down my troaté, and myself so kické, cuffé, and bruisé, dat I keep my bedé, and ave losé all my time and bus'nessé; and dat you will oblige him, the said Docteur S——l J——n, to maké compensation sufficient to me vor all my damage, out of de pay givé to himé, as hireling of de state vor treason to his country, and to demandé my pardon in the publique papier, and likewise to make de necessaire changé in his Dictionaire.

I ave de Honeur to be,

Vit all Respect possible,

Monsieur, Your very humble Serviteur,

Dugard de Belletête.







